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AAOM launches Melave Malka series with Israeli filmmaker

Michael Weiss, for the AAOM

The Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM) is launching its annual Melave Malka program this month with a presentation on February 4 by Israeli filmmaker Rafael Balulu, who will be screening his 2015 documentary *A Song of Loves: Rabbi David Buzaglo*.

Typically, a melave malka is a meal eaten after Shabbat which eases us into the week by escorting the "Shabbat malka," the Sabbath Queen, on her way out for the week. There are often musical performances, singing and eating to make it a party. Our program series is not a traditional melave malka because there is no dinner, but it is an evening of special learning/performance.

Balulu, a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies, has directed multiple shorts and feature-length films, including the documentary *Levantine* (2019), about the Levantine thinker and author Jacqueline Kahanoff, and the short films *Such Eyes* (2011), *Batman at the Checkpoint* (2012), and *My Name is Solomon Hagos* (2013). Following the screening of *A Song of Loves*, Balulu will answer questions from the audience. The screening and Q&A will be hosted at Michigan Hillel (1429 Hill St.) and will be free of charge and open to the public, although advance registration is requested.

Logan Wall

Rafael Balulu

Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg

Zvi Gitelman

The Melave Malka program continues through February and early March with a series of talks by AAOM authors on their most recent books:

On February 18, Logan Wall (Lecturer in the U-M Dept. of English Language and Literature) will discuss his recent book *Situating Poetry: Covenant and Genre in American Modernism*, published in 2022 by Johns Hopkins University Press. In this unique account of American modernism, Wall explores the ways community can grow from encounters with poetry. Charting the careers of Charles Reznikoff, Louis Zukofsky, James Weldon Johnson, Lola Ridge, and Robert

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Jewish theologian on climate change and Judaism

Professor Maya Benjamin will present the Fourth Annual Art and Mary Schuman Lecture, "Becoming Earthbound: Jewish Thought in an Age of Climate Change," at Eastern Michigan University, in the Student Center Auditorium at 7 p.m. on Monday, February 13.

Why has taking meaningful action addressing climate change been like pulling teeth, even when its effects are more and more extreme and harder and harder to deny? Many authors on the subject have suggested that there is something about the scope of the issue that makes it difficult for us to grasp or acknowledge. Not only does it confound our traditional understandings of agency and responsibility, but it also challenges the received understandings of the place of human beings in the universe. In short, we can't wrap our minds around it and so don't really engage with it.

The Irene Kaplan Leiwant Professor and Chair of Jewish Studies at Mt. Holyoke College, Benjamin's recent work focuses on ways the ongoing climate catastrophe challenges our thinking in general, and the assumptions and priorities of Jewish thought more specifically. In an essay published in 2022, Benjamin explains that her concern is motivated by a sense of there being a "fundamental incompatibility between what many of us recognize as 'Jewish thought' and a world on fire: when we speak in the terms and frameworks that have shaped Jewish intellectual traditions, we may feel less and less able to speak about the reality of our world." Benjamin is working to rectify this discrepancy.

Benjamin's 2018 book, *The Obligated Self: Maternal Subjectivity and Jewish Thought*, was the winner of the 2019 American Academy of Religion Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion (Constructive-Reflective Category) and was a 2018 National Jewish Book Award Finalist (Women's Studies section).

In this talk, Benjamin acknowledges the fact that many Jews are turning to classical texts to ground their ecological activism and she discusses how theology can enable us to address the deeper questions, prompted by climate change, about what it means to be an earthly creature.

This program will be a hybrid event so that viewers can attend in person or via Zoom. There is no cost to attend this event, however those seeking to attend virtually will need to register (Please go to the EMU Center for Jewish Studies website or the CJS Facebook page for registration links. If you have any questions, please contact director of the Center for Jewish Studies at EMU, Robert Erlewine (jewish.studies@emich.edu).

Additionally, on Tuesday, February 14 from 10–11:30 a.m., Temple Beth Emeth will host a brunch with locally sourced food, where Professor Benjamin will be interviewed by EMU Center for Jewish Studies Director Robert Erlewine about the previous night's lecture and her work more generally. (The event is open to the public. Donations of $5 will be requested from those who attend this event to offset the costs of the breakfast.) ■

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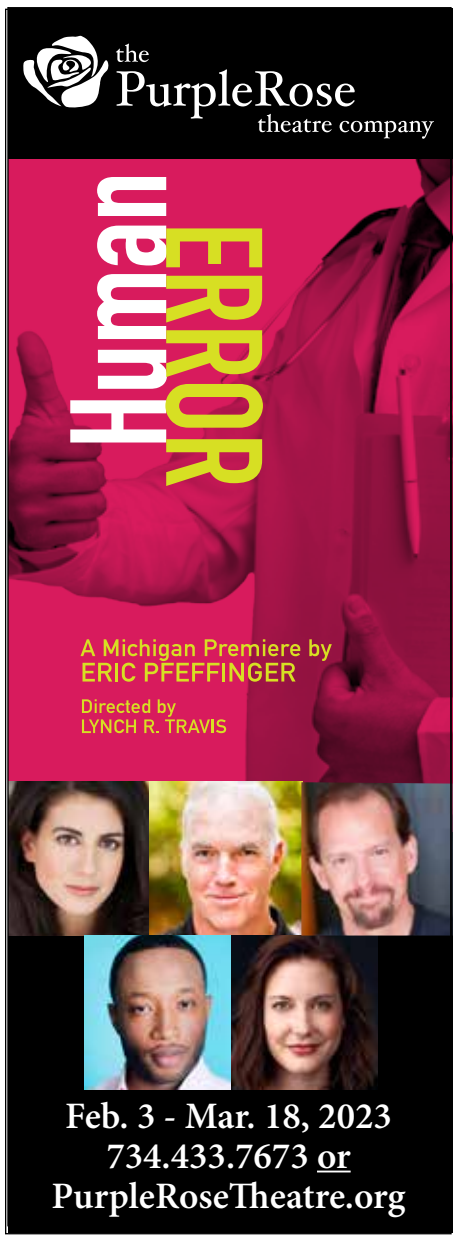

From the Editor

For all of us

The new Israeli government has been at the top of many Jewish news cycles in the last two months. This issue of WJN includes a four-page section of various American Jewish opinions (re-published from Jewish Currents, JNS, JTA, and the Forward) on the new government. By the time I had this February issue all ready to go to the printer there had been three weekly protests in Israel against changes in Israel's judiciary with tens of thousands, growing each week. I hope this section, though not current up-to-the-minute, will provide some opportunity for deep thinking.

Clare Kinberg

An opinion I'm thinking about but didn't re-publish is Haggai Matar's (executive editor of the news site +972) who wrote: "The far-right coalition has already provoked broad resistance from within Israeli society — but Palestine remains the elephant in the room. Palestinians, for their part, have so far mostly been sitting this one out. While many Jewish Israelis are mourning, terrified, or enraged over the barrage of illiberal legislation that they see as signifying the "end of Israeli democracy," most Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line never saw the regime as a democracy to begin with."

Standing Together, the grassroots people's movement organizing Jews and Palestinians in Israel, wrote in a Facebook post on January 9: "*This past Saturday night, Standing Together organized one of our largest protests ever. We gathered over 30,000 people – Jewish and Arab, gay and straight, center and periphery – in downtown Tel Aviv to protest the dangerous policies coming out of the new government. During this time of fear and confusion, it's easy to revert to Israel's classic political dichotomies: Arab versus Jewish. Religious versus secular. The 'enlightened' liberals versus the 'backward' conservatives. A narrow 'us' versus a narrow 'them.'*

"But that's not the way we see things. At Standing Together, we're not interested in obsolete political strategies that fail to build power and isolate the Left. Rather, we're building a new movement — the People's Left — to unite the majority around shared interests. That's why we organized our protest around a different message: 'This is the home of all of us.' And when we say 'us,' we really mean all of us — Palestinian and Jewish, religious and secular, gay and straight. We built a protest to reflect that diversity. We're building a movement to reflect that diversity. But Standing Together isn't here just to fight against the far right — we're here to fight for something. We're here to struggle for the majority who all deserve peace, equality, and an end to the occupation. This is the home of all of us. We're going to fight for that."

Focusing in on Jewish Washtenaw, this issue includes news on many interesting mid-winter programs at Eastern Michigan University and the Frankel Institute, the Orthodox Minyan, Temple Beth Emeth, the Jewish Cultural Society, Beth Israel, and more. It seems to me the Washtenaw Jewish grows more vibrant every month.

Remember, you can read the current and back issues of the WJN, in full color, on our website washtenawjewishnews.org. ■

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Rafael Balulu
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Modern Languages Building, Lec 2

"New Translations from Yiddish: Anita Norich and Julian Levinson"
February 9, 12:00pm
Hybrid
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Growing Orthodox leadership

Beth Dwoskin interviews Rabba Yael Keller

Ann Arbor's Rabba Yael Keller is one of just 58 women who have been ordained at Yeshivat Maharat, a rabbinical school providing training and rabbinic ordination to women to serve in the highest levels of leadership in the Orthodox world and beyond. Recently, WJN spoke with her about her career and about women as Orthodox rabbis.

WJN: What made you decide to be a rabbi?

Rabba Keller: I love engaging in Jewish learning and ritual. The rabbinate is not a traditional path for an Orthodox woman, so I was thrilled when Yeshivat Maharat was founded and made it possible for me to pursue advanced Jewish learning and leadership training. As a student at Yeshivat Maharat I completed synagogue internships in Skokie Valley, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. Through those experiences, I realized I felt a calling to go into the rabbinate. I find the work of sharing in and enriching people's lives through life cycle events, education, davening, and the events of the calendar year to be very fulfilling.

WJN: Please describe your position at the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan.

Rabba Keller: I am the Community Educator. I teach classes for adults, including a power half-hour of learning each Wednesday at 12:30. We explore themes of the parsha, using traditional and modern commentaries. I also run regular children's programming. Lastly, we are building a women's Rosh Chodesh circle that meets near the beginning of each Jewish month. I design and lead programs that help us come together as a community. For example, last month we had a Chanukah party that included an olive oil tasting for adults and building edible menorahs for children. Sharing in singing, socializing, and food around holidays is so important as a community.

WJN: And you also work at Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob Synagogue in Skokie, Illinois, correct?

Rabba Keller: Yes. Although I love Ann Arbor, I wanted a position where I could function as clergy in an Orthodox synagogue. This is still very new (only a little over a decade of ordained women at Yeshivat Maharat) and isn't a good fit in each community. I was thrilled when I saw that the synagogue where I interned was hiring. The senior rabbi there, Rabbi Ari Hart, has been a mentor and teacher of mine for several years and I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work for him in person and virtually as the rabbanit-in-residence in a part-time capacity. I speak regularly from the pulpit during services when I'm in residence, teach adult education classes, offer a pastoral presence, help Rabbi Hart officiate at life cycle events, and answer religious questions.

WJN: You are a Devora scholar for the 2022–2024 term. This is a program of JOFA, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, which provides funding for Orthodox synagogues in North America to hire their first paid Orthodox women in spiritual leadership roles. How does this impact your work in Skokie?

Rabba Keller: I am grateful to JOFA for helping to open clergy roles for women in Orthodox synagogues. It enables me to serve populations that aren't always served. For example, last fall, leading up to the high holidays, I spoke to several women who had Jewish legal questions or were searching for pastoral support at the auspicious time of year. I am proud to be the only female clergy serving in an Orthodox synagogue in the Midwest and hope that the Devora Scholars program will enable many other women to join me over the next several years.

WJN: What are the various titles that Orthodox women rabbis are using in their roles as ordained clergy?

Rabba Keller: When the first group of women were ordained, they received the title maharat, which is an acronym that stands for morah, halacha, ruhanit, v'Torah. Over the last decade it became more acceptable for women to take other titles including Rabba (female equivalent of Rabbi), Rabbanit (a title traditionally assigned to the rabbi's wife which is now used for female spiritual leaders in Israel and North America), and Rabbi. Titles are often chosen in collaboration with the hiring community. Here in Ann Arbor, I use the title Rabba and in Skokie I use the title Rabbanit. Titles are important, both to convey respect for a certain level of learning and to acknowledge a professional leadership role. However, since this is so new and titles can create anxiety within a community, they are often evolving over time and around the world wherever Maharat graduates are hired. ■

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A law professor worries Israel could become the next Hungary

Andrew Silow-Carroll, originally published by the JTA on January 8, 2023

Israel's new governing coalition has been called the "most right-wing" in the nation's history. That's heartening to supporters who want the country to get tough on crime and secure Jewish rights to live in the West Bank, and dismaying to critics who see a government bent on denying rights to Israel's minorities and undermining any hope for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While the far-right politics of new government ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir have drawn much of the world's attention, a series of proposed changes to Israel's judicial system has also been raising hopes and alarms. In early January, new Justice Minister Yariv Levin announced an overhaul that would limit the authority of the High Court of Justice, Israel's Supreme Court. It would put more politicians on the selection committee that picks judges, restrict the High Court's ability to strike down laws and government decisions and enact an "override clause" enabling the Knesset to rewrite court decisions with a simple majority.

Levin and his supporters on the right justify these changes as a way to restore balance to a system that he says puts too much control in the hands of (lately) left-leaning judges: "We go to the polls, vote, elect, and time after time, people we didn't elect choose for us. Many sectors of the public look to the judicial system and do not find their voices heard," he asserted. "That is not democracy."

Critics of the changes call them a power grab, one that will hand more leverage to the haredi Orthodox parties, remove checks on the settlement movement and limit civil society groups' ability to litigate on behalf of Israeli minorities.

To help me make sense of the claims on both sides, I turned to Tom Ginsburg of the University of Chicago, where he is the Leo Spitz Distinguished Service Professor of International Law and co-directs the Comparative Constitutions Project, which gathers and analyzes the constitutions of all independent nation-states. He's also a Jew who has transformed a former synagogue on the South Side of Chicago into a cutting-edge arts space, and says what's happening with Israel's new governing coalition "raises my complicated relationship with the country."

We spoke in early January. Our conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency: You have written about law in Israel, which lacks a constitution but relies on a series of "basic laws" to define its fundamental institutions. You've written that the Israeli judiciary had become "extremely powerful" — maybe too powerful — in imbuing the basic laws with a constitutional character, but worry that the current reforms will politicize the court in ways that will undermine Israeli democracy.

Tom Ginsburg: The proposed reforms were a campaign promise of certain elements of this coalition who have had longstanding grievances against the Israeli judiciary. The Israeli judiciary over the last decades has indeed become extremely powerful and important in writing or rewriting a constitution for Israel, promoting human rights and serving as a check and balance in a unicameral parliamentary system where the legislature can do anything it wants as a formal matter. A lot of people have had problems with that at the level of theory and practice. So there have been some reforms, and the court has, in my view, cut back on its activism in recent decades and in some sense has been more responsive to the center of the country. But there's longstanding grievances from the political right, and that's the context of these proposals.

JTA: A lot of the concerns about the new government in Israel are coming from the American Jewish left. But in an American context, the American Jewish left also has a big problem with the United States Supreme Court, because they see it as being too activist on the right. So in some ways isn't the new Israeli government looking to do what American Jewish liberals dream of doing in this country?

TG: Isn't that funny? But the context is really different. The basic point is that judicial independence is a really good thing. Judicial accountability is a really good thing. And if you study high courts around the world, as I do, you see that there's kind of a calibration, a balancing of institutional factors which lead towards more independence or more accountability and sometimes things switch around over time.

JTA: You mean "accountability" in the sense that courts should be accountable to the public.

TG: Right. The Israeli promoters of these plans are pointing to the United States, in particular, for the proposals for more political involvement in the appointment process. On the other hand, in the United States once you're appointed politically, you're serving for life. There's literally no check on your power. And so maybe some people think we have too much independence. If these proposals go through in Israel, there will be a front-end politicization of the court [in terms of the selection commission], but also back-end checks on the court [with the override clause that would allow a simple majority to reinstate laws struck down by the Supreme Court]. So in some sense, it moves the pendulum very far away from independence and very much towards accountability to the point of possible politicization.

JTA: And accountability in that case is too much of a good thing.

TG: Again, you don't want courts that can just make up rules. They should be responsive to society. On the other hand, you don't want judges who are so responsive to society that there's no protection for the basic rights of unpopular minorities.

JTA: What makes Israel either unique or different from some of the other countries you study, and certainly the United States? Part of it, I would guess, is the fact that it does not have a constitution. Is that a useful distinction?

TG: They couldn't agree on a single written constitution at the outset of the country, but they have built one through what you might call a "common law method": norms and practices over time as well as the system of "basic laws," which are passed by an absolute majority of the Knesset, where a majority of 61 votes can change any of those. But while they're not formally entrenched, they have a kind of political status because of that term: basic law.

By the way, the Germans are in the same boat. The German constitution is called the Basic Law. And it was always meant to be a provisional constitution until they got together and reunified.

If you don't have a written constitution, what's the source of the legitimacy of judicial power? What is to prevent a Knesset from just passing literally any law, including ones that violate all kinds of rights, or installing a dictator? It has been political norms. And because Israel has relied on political norms, that means that this current conflict is going to have extremely high stakes for Israeli governance for many decades to come.

JTA: Can you give me a couple of examples? What are the high stakes in terms of democratic governance?

TG: First of all, let me just say in principle that I don't oppose reforms to make the judiciary more independent or accountable in any particular country. But then you obviously have to look at the local context. What's a little worrying about this particular example is that several members of this coalition are themselves about to be subject to judicial proceedings.

JTA: Including the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

TG: Right. And for example, they need to change the rules so that [Shas Party chairman] Aryeh Deri can sit in the cabinet despite his prior convictions. That indicates to me that maybe this isn't a good-faith argument about the proper structure of the Israeli, uncodified constitution, but instead a mechanism of expediency.

Any one of these reforms might look okay, and you can find other countries that have done them. The combination, however, renders the judiciary extremely weak. Right now, it's a multi-stakeholder commission that nominates and appoints judges in Israel, and the new coalition wants to propose that the commission be made up of a majority of politicians. We know that when you change the appointments mechanism to put more politicians on those committees, the more politicized they become.

Think about the United States process of appointing our Supreme Court judges: It's highly politicized, and obviously the legitimacy of the court has taken a big hit in recent years. In Israel, you'd have politicized appointments under these reforms, but then you also have the ability of the Knesset to override any particular ruling that it wanted. Again, you can find countries which have that. It's called the "new commonwealth model" of constitutionalism, in which courts don't have the final say on constitutional matters, and the legislature can overrule them on particular rulings. But I think the combination is very dangerous because you could have a situation where the Knesset — which currently has a role in protecting human rights — can pick out and override specific cases, which really to me goes against the idea of the rule of law.

JTA: You mentioned other countries. Are there other countries where these kinds of changes were enacted and we saw how the experiment turned out?

TG: The two most prominent recently are Hungary and Poland, which are not necessarily countries that you want to compare yourself to.

JTA: Certainly not if you are Israel.

TG: Right. There's so much irony here. When the new Polish government came in in 2015, they immediately manipulated the appointment system for the Constitutional Court and appointed their own majority, which then allowed them to pass legislation which probably would have been ruled unconstitutional. They basically set up a system where they were going to replace lower judges and so they were going to grow themselves into a majority of the court. And that's led to controversy and rulings outside the mainstream that have led to protests, while the European Union is withholding funds and such from Poland because of this manipulation of the court.

In Hungary, Victor Orban was a really radical leader, and when he had a bare majority to change the constitution, he wiped out all the previous jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court. I don't think the Israeli government would do that. But still there is this kind of worrying sense that they're able to manipulate interpretation of law for their own particular political interest.

Another thing I want to raise is the potential for a constitutional crisis now. Suppose they pass these laws and the Israeli Supreme Court says, "Well, wait a minute, that interferes with our common law rules that we are bound by, going back to the British Mandate." It conflicts with the basic law and they invoke what legal scholars call the "doctrine of unconstitutional constitutional amendments," which is basically saying that an amendment goes against the core of our democratic system and violates, for example, Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic society. Israel has never done this, but it is a kind of tool that one sees deployed around the world in these crises. And if that happened, then I think you would have a full constitutional crisis on your hands in Israel.

JTA: What does a constitutional crisis look like?

TG: Suppose you have sitting justices in Israel who say, "You know, this Knesset law violates the basic law and therefore it's invalid." And then, would the Knesset try to impeach those judges? Would they cut the budget of the judiciary? Would they back down?

JTA: When you compare Israel's judicial system to other countries' over the years, how does it stack up? Is it up there among the very strong systems or is it known for flaws that might have maybe hobbled its effectiveness?

TG: It's always been seen around the world as a very strong judiciary. Under the leadership of Aharon Barak [president of Israel's Supreme Court from 1995 to 2006] it became extremely activist. And this provoked backlash in Israeli politics. That led to a kind of recalibration of the court where it is still doing its traditional role of defending fundamental rights and ensuring the integrity of the political process,

but it's not making up norms left and right, in the way that it used to. This is my perception. But it's certainly seen as one of the leading courts around the world, its decisions are cited by others, and because of the quality of the judges and the complex issues that Israel faces it's seen as a strong court and an effective court and to me a balanced court.

But, you know, I'm not in Israel, and ultimately, they're going to figure out the question how balanced it is or where it's going to go. I do worry that an unchecked majoritarian system, especially with a pure proportional representation model like Israel, has the potential for the capture of government by some minorities to wield power against other minorities. And that's a problem for democracies — to some degree, that's a problem we face in the United States.

JTA: How correctable are these reforms? I am thinking of someone who says, "These are democratically elected representatives who now want to change a system. If you want to change the system, elect your own majority." Is the ship of state like this really hard to turn around once you go in a certain direction?

TG: This is an area in which I think Israel and the United States have a lot of similarities. For several decades now, the judiciary has been a major issue for those on the political right. They thought the Warren Court was too left-leaning and they started the Federalist Society to create a whole cadre of people to staff the courts. They've done that and now the federal courts are certainly much more conservative than the country probably. But the left didn't really have a theory of judicial power in the United States. And I think that's kind of true in Israel: It's a big issue for the political right, but the political left, besides just being not very cohesive at the moment, isn't able to articulate what's good about having an independent judiciary. It is correctable in theory, but that would require the rule of law to become a politically salient issue, which it generally isn't in that many countries.

JTA: How do you relate to what is happening in Israel as a Jew, and not just a legal scholar?

TG: That's a great question, because it really raises my complicated relationship with the country. You know, I find it to be a very interesting democracy. I like going to Israel because it's a society in which there's a lot of argument, a lot of good court cases and a lot of good legal scholars. On one level, I connect with my colleagues and friends there who seem very demoralized about this current moment. And I honestly worry about whether this society will remain a Jewish and democratic one with the current coalition.

The rule of law is a part of democracy. You need the rule of law in order to have democracy function. And I know others would respond and say, "Oh, you're just being hysterical." And, "This isn't Sweden, it's the Middle East." But the ethno-nationalist direction of the country bothers me as a Jew, and I hope that the court remains there to prevent it from deepening further. ■

Israel's ascendant far right can't be understood by analogy

By Peter Beinart, originally printed in Jewish Currents: jewishcurrents.org, November 7, 2022

Now that Itamar Ben-Gvir appears poised to become a power broker in Israel's next government, journalists are grasping for analogies with far-right upstarts in other lands. *The Telegraph* says he is "reminiscent of French hard-Right opposition leader Marine Le Pen." *Haaretz* notes that "Americans are already viewing Ben-Gvir as a Trump-like figure." According to *The Guardian*, "Ben-Gvir's rise is reflective of wide authoritarian political trends around the world."

The impulse to draw comparisons to figures like Le Pen, Trump, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is understandable. Ben-Gvir — a follower of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose party was banned in Israel for "incitement to racism" in the 1980s — is a media-hound and a racist; he delights in threatening violence, and he's risen swiftly from the political margins to the corridors of power.

But these parallels are mostly wrong. Ben-Gvir is different because Israel is different. In France, the U.S., Italy, and India, right-wing leaders are seeking — to varying degrees — to create ethnocracies, states that define themselves as belonging to a dominant ethnic, religious, or racial group. Their centrist opponents — to varying degrees — support legal equality for all citizens. This divide creates deep ideological polarization. But Israel is not deeply ideologically polarized. It's already an ethnocracy and no major political party wants to change that. That's what sets Ben-Gvir apart from figures like Trump and Le Pen: His rivalry with his centrist foes may be politically fierce, but it's not a contest over the basic definition of the state. In the global struggle between group supremacy and equality under the law, Ben-Gvir and his centrist rivals are on the same side.

To grasp what sets Ben-Gvir and the Israeli context apart, look at immigration, the signature grievance of Le Pen, Meloni, and Trump. Each has built a political brand on promising to stop migrants from the Global South from undermining their nation's white, Christian character. Trump proposed a wall and a Muslim ban. Meloni desires a naval blockade to prevent migration across the Mediterranean. Le Pen wants to tighten asylum laws and end birthright citizenship so children born to migrant parents in France don't gain legal equality. Immigration doesn't enjoy the same political salience in India because it's not as attractive a destination for migrants. But even there, Modi has tried to alter asylum laws to exclude Muslims, and thus bolster Hindu demographic dominance.

Ben-Gvir doesn't need to propose these kinds of changes. He does fervently oppose admitting asylum seekers, but restricting migration to preserve Israel's ethnic and religious identity hasn't been central to his rise. The reason is simple: Israel already does that. As a Jewish state, it radically privileges Jewish immigration. Jews can move to Israel and gain citizenship immediately. For non-Jews, by contrast, moving to Israel and gaining citizenship is extremely difficult. For Palestinians whose families were expelled from what is now Israel, it's impossible. Israel's immigration policy is already more discriminatory than anything being proposed by Le Pen, Meloni, Modi, or Trump.

Ben-Gvir's centrist rivals fervently support this status quo. In 2003, Israel passed a Citizenship Law preventing Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza Strip who marry Palestinian citizens of Israel from thereby gaining citizenship themselves. The law has been extended every year since then. Last year, Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party flirted with opposing the extension — despite favoring it

substantively — as a ploy to try to topple then-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's multi-party coalition. In response, Israel's centrist politicians maneuvered frantically to ensure that the extension passed. The Citizenship Law was vital, declared then-foreign minister Yair Lapid, because "it's one of the tools aimed at ensuring Israel's Jewish majority."

This alignment on immigration reflects an alignment on the fundamental nature of the state. Lapid's Yesh Atid Party constitutes the largest centrist rival to the right-wing coalition that now includes Ben-Gvir. But it unabashedly opposes Israel becoming a "state for all its citizens," as proposed by Palestinian members of the Knesset, which treats Jews and Palestinians equally. Centrists like President Joseph Biden, France's Emmanuel Macron, or Italy's Mario Draghi may be imperfect champions of legal equality. But it's impossible to imagine them stating, as Lapid did in 2019, "I am, and I have been, against any kind of 'state of all its citizens' my entire life." In India, one of the deepest political cleavages concerns the opposition of the Congress Party — which remains, despite its waning fortunes, the largest rival to Modi's ultra-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) — to Modi's efforts to create a Hindu state. The Congress Party declares on its website that India must stay a secular state that "does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion." In Israel, by contrast, the need to preserve a Jewish state is a matter of political consensus. On the virtue of ethnocracy, the right and center utterly agree.

In the past, they at least differed on where to draw the Jewish state's borders: The right wanted to hold all the territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea; the center wanted to leave most of the occupied territories and thus divest itself of a Palestinian population that threatened Israel's Jewish majority. But even that division has faded. For Lapid and Israel's other leading centrist politician, Benny Gantz, support for a Palestinian state is now almost entirely theoretical. It's freighted with prerequisites that ensure such a "state" would constitute little more than a glorified version of the status quo, in which the Palestinian Authority performs administrative tasks while the Israeli army retains ultimate control. This means that, functionally, they support a Jewish state from the river to the sea. When the conservative political commentator Dan Senor recently noted that despite Israel's apparent polarization, "on the actual issues there's pretty broad consensus," this is what he meant: No Israeli party with a shot at taking power supports the egalitarian principles that hold sway in centrist and progressive circles in countries like the U.S., Italy, India, and France.

That's not to say that Ben-Gvir and Lapid agree on everything. But their disagreements are different from those between Le Pen and Macron or Trump and Biden. The most significant divide between Ben-Gvir and Lapid isn't about immigration; it's about deportation. Lapid does not support expelling Israel's Palestinian citizens. Ben-Gvir, on the other hand, has since adolescence revered Kahane, who argued that Jewish supremacy could never be secure so long as Israel retained a substantial Palestinian population. A Jewish state, wrote Kahane in his 1981 book, *They Must Go,* requires "a permanent Jewish majority and a small, insignificant, and placid Arab minority. But the Arabs believe that the Jews are thieves who stole their land. The Arabs feel no ties to or emotions for a state that breathes 'Jewishness.' And they grow."

The same anxiety underlies Ben-Gvir's agenda today. Unlike Lapid, who believes Israel's ethnocracy is stable, Ben-Gvir believes it is weak. It is weak because Israel's Palestinian citizens are too numerous and insufficiently subservient. "The time," he declared on election night, "has come for us to reassert ownership of this state." Unlike Kahane, Ben- Gvir does not call for expelling all of Israel's Palestinian citizens, just the "disloyal" ones.

But during the campaign his party ran ads featuring the faces of two of Israel's most popular Palestinian politicians alongside the words "May our enemies be banished." Ben-Gvir's notion of disloyalty is expansive. Whether or not he believes he can expel Palestinian citizens from the country, the threat serves a purpose. It bolsters Israeli ethnocracy by warning that Palestinians may face harsh reprisals if they challenge it.

Lapid does not consider such threats necessary. He might even consider them counterproductive, since they could lead international observers to question the legitimacy of the Jewish state that both he and Ben-Gvir support. But ultimately, Lapid's objection is to Ben-Gvir's methods, not his end goal.

In Israel today, the political battle isn't between group supremacy and equality under the law. It's over how group supremacy can best be upheld. After the election, *Haaretz* called Ben-Gvir "a Trump-like figure." That's understandable. But in the kind of country Ben- Gvir's rivals want, they are Trump-like figures too.

Peter Beinart is the editor-at-large of Jewish Currents. ■

Can U.S. Jews love the real Israel — or only the fantasy version?

Jonathan S. Tobin, originally published by JNS on December 30, 2022

Most Americans don't like the Jewish state's new government. But it still deserves their support against those who work to undermine and destroy it.

The Israeli government that was sworn in on December 28, 2022, brings with it new challenges for those who care about the Jewish state. The characterization of the latest coalition led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the "most right-wing" in the country's nearly 75-year history is not wrong. And most American Jews are not happy about it.

The question is whether enough of them can swallow their abhorrence for Netanyahu or his coalition partners, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, in order to avoid the kind of open break between the two communities that would do real, perhaps permanent, damage to the U.S.-Israel alliance.

The answer is that they should, for a number of reasons — not the least of which is that a palpable breach in the relationship will be exploited by the intersectional left wing of the Democratic Party and others who are either anti-Zionist or indifferent to Israel's fate. It's far from clear, however, that mainstream liberal Jewish groups are capable of transcending their ideological differences with the new constellation in Jerusalem.

Nor is it likely that they'll demonstrate the leadership required to unite a divided community behind the idea that the wishes of Israel's voters should be respected, and that U.S. pressure to "save the Jewish state from itself" should be vociferously opposed. For one thing, the split has an obvious cause.

Israel is a center-right country, with a clear majority preferring parties of the Netanyahu-led right-wing/religious bloc. American Jews lean heavily to the left, with most supporting Democrats over the generally more pro-Israel Republicans.

The partisan aspect of this dilemma mustn't be underestimated. At a time when politics has replaced the role that religion used to play in the lives of most Americans,

the fact that a growing number of American Jews regard the Jewish state as the moral equivalent of a red state creates an enormous barrier between them and Israelis. If Americans — including Jews — are now more opposed to "inter-political marriage" than to interracial or interfaith relationships, Jewish Democrats are bound to find it increasingly difficult to feel close to Israel.

Religious differences are also important. The majority of Americans identify with the non-Orthodox denominations, the center of whose faith is liberal politics. And though most Israelis are not religious, even the secular tend to see Orthodoxy as the only legitimate form of Judaism. Americans have trouble fathoming this mindset and the fact that more than 26% of Israelis voted for the explicitly Orthodox parties of varying stripes whose representatives make up half of the governing coalition.

Yet the difference between these two tribes goes beyond politics or religion, and extends into the realm of identity. It's about whether liberal Americans are able to accept the idea of a sectarian state, even if it's the sole Jewish one on the planet.

The United States is a country whose existence is rooted in universal values that seek to break down the barriers between peoples and faiths. In contrast, Israel — like most other nations — is an embodiment of particularism. Its priority is to reconstitute and defend sovereignty in the ancient homeland of the Jews, not to be the last and best hope of all mankind.

The inherent tension between a state whose purpose is sectarian, but which seeks to govern itself democratically and with respect for the rights of the religious and ethnic minorities within its borders, is a perennial theme of Israeli debates. The current coalition represents the view that defending Jewish rights and safety should be prioritized, even while honoring and upholding — despite the slander of its opponents — basic democratic principles.

Meanwhile, the assumption that American Jews were always steadfast proponents of Zionism, and only began to become disillusioned by the ascendancy of the Likud in 1977 — especially over the 13 years of Netanyahu's unprecedented run as prime minister — is a myth. The periods of the greatest American-Jewish enthusiasm for Israel were more the exception than the rule.

American-Jewish resistance to Zionism was ferocious in the half century from its founding to the birth of Israel in 1948. Though two Reform rabbis — Stephen Wise and Abba Hillel Silver — became leading advocates for a Jewish state in the 1930s and 1940s, the Reform movement was ideologically opposed to any thought of a promised land other than the United States. Mainstream groups like the American Jewish Committee had a similar bent.

The Holocaust, and then the drama of Israel's creation and early wars, effectively squelched anti-Zionist sentiment as an active political force for a time. But that consensus ended once the murder of six million Jews — who had no homeland to flee to before there was an Israel — was safely in the distant past. After 1973, the possibility of a second genocide, should the Jewish state suffer a catastrophic military defeat, no longer seemed realistic.

The revival of the pre-1948 debate about Zionism was thus inevitable. An Israel still confronted with the arduous and often messy problems of conducting a generational war against Islamists and Arab nationalists incapable of accepting the legitimacy of a Jewish state was bound to horrify Jews whose vision of liberalism made them suspicious of particularistic nation states.

For the first decades of Israel's existence, the above differences with Americans were papered over by the dominance of Labor Zionism, whose universalist rhetoric meshed nicely with liberal sensibilities, even if the security policies it pursued did not. But even in its most idealized form, a particularistic project such as Zionism has been a difficult sell for American Jews, the overwhelming bulk of whom see sectarian concerns not only as antithetical to their well-being, but possibly racist, as well.

Having found a home in which they were granted free access to every sector of American society, and in which the non-Jewish majority proved willing to marry them, they unsurprisingly have had difficulty coming to terms with an avowedly ethno-religious state with such a different raison d'être.

Moreover, an American-Jewish population in which the acceptance of assimilation has created a large and fast-growing group the demographers call "Jews of no religion" is bound to take a dim view of a country that specifically defines itself as a Jewish state, no matter how generous its policies toward the Palestinians or the non-Orthodox denominations might be. If many American Jews are no longer certain that their community's survival matters, how can one possibly expect them to regard the interest of Israeli Jews in preserving their state against dangerous foes with anything but indifference?

Many Jews talk about their willingness to support a nicer, less nationalist and religious Israel than the one that elected Netanyahu and his allies. They support efforts by Democrats to pressure it to make suicidal concessions to Palestinians who, whether Americans are willing to admit it or not, purpose Israel's elimination. They also want it to be more welcoming to liberal variants of Judaism that Americans practice, and for the Orthodox to have less influence.

But even if you think those changes would make Israel better or safer, a majority of Israelis disagree. So, while much of the criticism is framed as a defense of democracy to sync with Democratic Party talking points that smear Republicans, there's nothing democratic about thwarting the will of a nation's voters or seeking to impose a mindset they regard as alien to their needs.

The challenge for liberals is not just how to cope with an Israel led by Netanyahu, Smotrich, and Ben-Gvir, or to put aside the partisan hyperbole branding it as a fascist or fundamentalist tyranny. It's accepting the fact that Israel is not a Middle Eastern variant of the blue state enclaves where most American Jews live.

They need to grasp that simple, but still difficult-to-accept concept and forget about the Israel of liberal fantasies. If they can, it should be easy for them to understand that no matter who is running Israel — or how its people think, worship or vote — the sole Jewish state's continued survival is still a just and worthy cause.

Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Follow him on Twitter at: @jonathans_tobin. ■

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Why this Zionist rabbi has stopped saying the Prayer for the State of Israel

By Jodi Rudoren, originally published in the Forward, January 6, 2023

When Ansche Chesed, a Conservative synagogue in the liberal bastion of Manhattan's Upper West Side, convenes for Shabbat services tomorrow, three familiar words will not be recited from the bimah: raishit smichat gi'ulateinu. Hebrew for "the initial sprouting of our redemption." It's the signature line from the "Prayer for the State of Israel" that Jews worldwide have been saying each week since shortly after the modern state was founded almost 75 years ago.

Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky, Ansche Chesed's longtime leader, feels he can no longer honestly and full-throatedly pray for the success of Israel's leaders, ministers, and advisers, as this liturgy calls for, since its new government includes right-wing extremists he considers akin to the Ku Klux Klan.

"I don't hope that this government succeeds; I hope that this government falls and is replaced by something better," he explained in an interview. "I just could not imagine us saying this prayer that their efforts be successful. I think their efforts are dastardly."

Rabbi Kalmanofsky is a staunch, lifelong Zionist — a liberal Zionist, as most American Jews would describe themselves, but also a religious Zionist, in the sense of seeing a Jewish homeland in the holy land as a fulfillment of a fundamental tenet of our faith, which makes the radicalization of Israel's Religious Zionist party feel particularly personal for him. This is a guy who, in 2013, made a little news in our pages by blocking a discussion of Israeli democracy that included a supporter of the boycott movement from taking place at his shul.

He is not a rabble-rouser on social media, and does not consider himself an "activist" rabbi, though he has been arrested twice for civil disobedience. First, at a protest in Albany about school funding, and then in 2017, along with 18 other rabbis affiliated with the human-rights group T'ruah, for blocking access to New York City's Trump Hotel in response to the former president's refugee policy. He is 56 and wore a large green yarmulke as he sipped soup from a takeout container backed by a bookshelf of Jewish texts when we spoke Wednesday evening (until he had to go make a shiva call). He is a serious, sober thinker who runs a 650-family congregation founded in 1829.

Rabbi Kalmanofsky did not think it was enough to join hundreds of his colleagues in signing a letter last month vowing not to let the Religious Zionist party's leaders speak at their synagogues. Like many of those rabbis, he gave a sermon — or as he described it, an "impassioned screed" — decrying the results of the latest Israeli election, but felt the situation demanded a more sustained response.

At first, he thought he'd write something to replace the prayer for Israel pasted into Ansche Chesed's prayer books, but "that just proved a little harder than I thought," the rabbi said. "It may yet come." He looked at some alternative — "lefty" was the word he used — prayers and poems that have circulated over the years but found them too "ambivalent about Zionism" or otherwise lacking, concluding that they would not "work for me as a Jewish prayer in a Jewish setting."

So for the last few weeks the congregation has been reciting Psalm 122 to, as their handout frames it, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem and all who live under her authority."

"Is it a permanent change or a temporary change? I confess I don't really have an answer," he told me. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, who could be against this? It's got a breadth of vision, which is nice. It's also got some shortcomings."

No one has quit the board or the shul or stormed out of services in protest, though some challenging questions have come up, which Rabbi Kalmanofsky addressed in a lengthy blog post on the synagogue's website. Like: "Isn't democracy a process not an outcome?" as he put it. "Isn't this just cherry-picking the democratic outcomes that you like?" How come you didn't stop saying the prayer for the U.S. during the Trump administration — or when the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade? Would you stop if Trump were elected in 2024? What about Ron DeSantis?

And, perhaps most pointed: Doesn't this Israeli government need our prayers more than any before?

"The claim that I'm making is that in the avatars of Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, we have moved beyond the healthy disagreement of public life," Rabbi Kalmanofsky said, referring to the new ministers of national security and finance. "In the avatars of these two people and what they represent, and the viciousness and the violence that they themselves have been associated with, it's just way beyond the pale of what anybody should tolerate."

"The fair question here, the opposite question is not Ron DeSantis, Kevin McCarthy ,or Ted Cruz or blah blah blah blah blah, but more like David Duke," he added. "Possibly Marjorie Taylor Greene. I just consider these guys the Klan."

The traditional Prayer for the State of Israel was written by Israel's first pair of chief rabbis, Isaac Halevi Herzog and Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, edited by the legendary Hebrew novelist Shai (S.Y.) Agnon, and first published in Israeli newspapers in September, 1948. It has been a mainstay of prayer books used around the world ever since, though a number of rabbis have authored alternative prayers for Israel that have come in and out of fashion.

It is somewhat messianic, which does not work for Haredi Jews who believe redemption will only come from the study of Torah and adherence to halacha. And it is certainly very strongly Zionist, asking God to "grant victory" to "those who defend" the holy land, i.e. the Israeli military, and suggesting that Jews alone should "possess" it.

I grew up mumbling along with this prayer every Saturday morning, and remember keenly the pride of pronouncing raishit smichat gi'ulateinu loudly and clearly while in Israel for the very first time, as a 17-year-old Jewish youth group leader who just spent a week visiting the death camps of Poland. During the years I served as Jerusalem bureau chief of The New York Times and a while after, when I happened to be in shul, I would stand for the prayer but not join in; it felt too much like taking sides in a conflict I was committed to covering with complete fairness.

The Reform synagogue I belong to now does not use the traditional prayer, but instead uses an English version with what our rabbi described as "a great universal message." It's shorter and simpler, describes the modern state as "the dawning of hope for all who seek peace" — which is probably not something any Palestinian would agree with — and mimics the original in mentioning the government's leaders and advisers, the main thing Kalmanofsky could not abide.

It is far too early to tell what will happen to Israel under its new stewardship. Itamar Ben-Gvir's senseless, audacious pilgrimage to the Temple Mount/Dome of the Rock compound, the site holy to both Muslims and Jews and flashpoint of so much tension and violence, certainly is a haunting harbinger. I am deeply worried about the independence of Israel's judiciary, about the new government's threats to LGBTQ people and plans to redefine who is considered Jewish under Israeli law, and of course about the ongoing, escalating violence against Palestinians.

What is there for us American Jews to do about it? I don't think boycott is the answer. Rather, I think this moment calls for more engagement with Israel. We should go and explore for ourselves what is changing on the ground. We should support the advocacy groups and politicians who are standing up to the extremists, who represent whatever our individual visions are for its seemingly hopeless future. We should cultivate ahavat Yisrael, our love of Israel — its people, food, music, society, the idea of it — even as we challenge or criticize its policies.

And perhaps, for a while, I'll take a page from Rabbi Kalmanofsky and pray for the peace of Jerusalem and its people rather than the success of the politicians in charge.

Jodi Rudoren is Editor-in-Chief of the Forward. She served as New York Times Jerusalem bureau chief from 2012 through 2015. ■

How AA Reconstructionist Congregation is an "ecosystem"

Emily Eisbruch, special to the Washtenaw Jewish News

Metaphors can change our minds and lives, according to Zingerman's cofounder Ari Weinzweig. Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) board co-chair Rena Basch thinks that a fitting metaphor for AARC is an ecosystem providing holistic nurturing and growth. She noted, "AARC is growing people and cultivating community. We are growing the values of nurturing, support, care, spirituality, tikkun olam, kindness, and love. Let's try to embed the ecosystem model in our minds as we think about AARC, as we participate in AARC, as we make decisions about AARC."

A key factor in the AARC's vitality is the energy coming from the lay leadership. Since the departure of our Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner in summer 2022, the AARC has been sustained and strengthened by the dedication and talent in our membership ranks. Members have organized and led inspiring twice-monthly services and brought to life an incredible davening team (a team leading song and prayer). There's been excellent participation in "mishpacha groups," which are weekly or bi-weekly Zoom friendship groups that strengthen communal bonds.

The AARC Beit Sefer (religious school), is flourishing under the vibrant leadership of Dr. Marcy Epstein. A skilled tech team, led by AARC communication and events coordinator Gillian Jackson, ensures our services and events are accessible to all. Fostering intellectual curiosity and friendships, the AARC Book Group is going strong, with Greg Saltzman as coordinator. Members share news and reflections on things happening in our Ann Arbor community and beyond in a lively opt-in email forum known as "Reconchat."

The congregation celebrated the inspiring adult bat mitzvah of Brenna Reichman in December 2022, officiated by AARC member Deb Kraus. The b'nai mitzvah of Mollie Rose Meadow and Isaac Meadow, twins who grew up in the AARC, was recently led by Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg.

As befits a healthy ecosystem, each element within the AARC supports and strengthens the other. "At our recent annual meeting we asked what is thriving and what needs nurturing," comments AARC board co-chair Debra Gombert. "We are grateful for the ecosystem metaphor as we nurture our interconnectedness and plan our future growth." Looking to the future, a search committee for a new AARC rabbi has recently been launched, chaired by Carole Caplan-Sosin.

The AARC is a warm, inclusive community of people who want to practice and study Judaism — or simply be around people who share a commitment to Judaism's values. You are invited to visit https://aarecon.org/ to learn more about the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation.

AARC events in February

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service
February 11, 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
This is a hybrid Shabbat Service led by members of the congregation at the JCC. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat
February 24, 6:30 p.m., in person at the JCC and on Zoom.
This is a hybrid service led by Idelle Hammond-Sass and Harry Fried.

AARC Book Group
February 26, 3–4:30 p.m. on Zoom.
We will be reading *People Love Dead Jews* by Dara Horn. Please email Greg Saltzman for more information: gsaltzman@albion.edu. ■

Orthodox Minyan January events

For information about all events, please visit annarborminyan.org/announcements or contact rabbayael@annarborminyan.org

Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat Maariv Service
Every Friday evening, beginning 20–30 minutes before sunset. Michigan Hillel.

Shabbat Morning Service
Every Saturday morning, 9:30 a.m. Michigan Hillel.

Parsha Party with Morah Milka
Children's programming for "walkers and talkers." Every Saturday morning, 10:30 a.m. Michigan Hillel.

Shabbat Mincha Service
Every Saturday afternoon, approximately 30 minutes before sunset. Michigan Hillel.

Daily Minyan
Shacharit services are held jointly with Chabad Monday–Friday at 7:30 a.m. and Sunday at 8:45 a.m. Weekday Shacharit is at Hillel on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and at Chabad on Sunday, Monday, and Friday. Mincha and Maariv are normally held Sunday through Friday at Hillel, at times that vary throughout the year.

Parsha Lunch and Learn
Join us Wednesdays in February at 12:30 p.m. to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the Book of Exodus. Zoom Link visit website.

Melave Malka series: Israeli Film Night
February 4 at 7:30 p.m.
The AAOM kicks off its Melave Malka series with an evening with Israeli film writer and director Refael Balulu, who will screen his movie *A Song of Loves: Rabbi David Buzaglo*, which explores the life of Rabbi David Buzaglo, the greatest Hebrew liturgical poet of the twentieth century. Followed by a Q&A session with the filmmaker. At Michigan Hillel.

Children's Tu B'Shvat Seder
February 5, 3 p.m.
Sing songs, taste new foods, and listen to a story. At the home of a community member.

Tu B'Shvat Seder
February 5, 8 p.m.
Celebrate Tu B'Shvat with learning, singing, and new foods/wine. At the home of a community member.

Melave Malka series: AAOM Authors
February 18, 8 p.m.
Dr. Logan Wall of the U-M Department of English Language and Literature will present on his recent book, *Situating Poetry: Covenant and Genre in American Modernism* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022), followed by a Q&A with the audience. On Zoom. Registration information at the AAOM website.

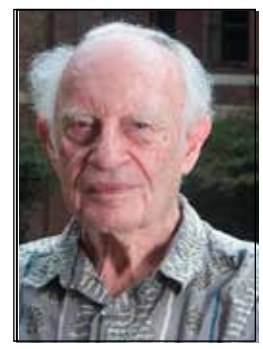
Women's Rosh Chodesh Group
February 22 8:30 PM

Melave Malka series: AAOM Authors
February 25, 8 p.m.
Zvi Gitelman, Professor Emeritus of Judaic Studies and Political Science, will discuss his in-progress book, a textbook on Ukrainian Jewish history intended for use in Ukrainian higher educational institutions. This is a politically sensitive enterprise for reasons Professor Gitelman will elucidate. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A with the audience. On Zoom. Registration information at the AAOM website.

Melave Malka series: AAOM Authors
March 4, 8 p.m.
Professor Rebecca Wollenberg of the Frankel Center will present on her forthcoming book, *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible* (Princeton University Press, 2023), followed by a Q&A with the audience. On Zoom. Registration information at the AAOM website. ■

CRT, misunderstood by those who oppose it

The Jewish Cultural Society's Second Friday Schmooze in February will feature Charles Garvin speaking about "The importance of Critical Race Theory." The public is invited to the talk and discussion, which will be held at the Jewish Community Center, Gelman Lounge, at 7:30 p.m. on February 10.



Charles Garvin is a Professor Emeritus of Social Work at the University of Michigan. He has published 15 books and many articles on social work, practice with groups, and social justice. He serves on the boards of Jewish Family Service of Ann Arbor and the International Association of Social Work with Groups. He is one of the founders of JCS. He sees the coming years as continuing his commitment to striving for social justice. He has sought to disseminate the ideas of critical race theory because it is an important yet misunderstood topic, especially by those who oppose it.

The presentation will explain the ideas of critical race theory and help the audience to discuss their experiences and ideas about this concept. Ten dimensions of CRT have been identified in a recent article, including structural issues in society, cultural beliefs, racism inherent in some laws and legislation, historical memories of racist acts, and the allocation of power in society. These and others will be presented and discussed. Garvin says "Special note will be made of the laws against teaching CRT by bodies who have no idea what it is other than discomfort when learning about past and present oppression." ■

Ann Arbor represents at national philanthropic women's conference

By Joan Lowenstein, JFNA's Women's Philanthropy Board

What are the consequences of Israel's recent elections and switch to a right-wing government? This was the question on the minds of many at the December International Lion of Judah Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. It was the 50th anniversary celebration of the Lion of Judah, a giving category of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), representing women who make an annual gift to their local Federation of $5,000 or more. More than 1,300 women, mainly from North America, attended the 3-day conference, the first held since before the pandemic. After attending this conference in person, I would like to share what I learned and experienced.

In small sessions as well as plenaries, one topic discussed multiple times by experts from Jewish organizations and government officials was that the changes in makeup of the Knesset do not necessarily affect philanthropic and humanitarian projects in Israel.

"We have been working with the government in Israel since 1914, when it was the Ottoman Empire," said Ariel Zwang, CEO of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The JDC is an international Jewish humanitarian organization supported in part by Jewish Federations across North America, including the greater Ann Arbor community, through the local Annual Community Campaign. Zwang noted that the JDC's work, which establishes pilot programs that are scaled or developed by the Israeli government, is largely with career civil servants who are not affected by who is in government. For example, with the Mafteach ("key") program, JDC promoted job development in the Haredi (ultra-religious) community. Zwang noted that this kind of program leads to systemic change and is one of the many projects where money from Federations is multiplied or leveraged with Israeli government funding.

According to Dani Wassner, chair of Israel Government relations for JFNA, the big issue in Israeli elections, like in the United States, is crime. But, he said, Prime Minister Netanyahu seems solely focused on a different issue: Iran. In addition, he predicted that there will be small moves under the new conservative government to legalize settlement outposts, but he did not think any major policies would change.

The opinions of Jews living outside of Israel do matter in the Jewish state, and JFNA works to make Israeli politicians aware of the interests of American Jews. The organization has funded what they call "reverse missions," taking Knesset members to American communities. Seven years ago, JFNA took the now-Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich to the west coast — it was his first time on an airplane.

Interestingly, JDC funding is not exclusive to Jewish Israelis. Because obtaining government grants is a difficult bureaucratic task in any country, JDC created resource administrators to help NGOs in Israel, including Arab NGOs, apply for Israeli government funds.

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), another agency that is supported by Jewish Federations, does not receive core funding from the government, and does not limit funding to Israeli Jews. Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh is from the Druze village of Daliat al Carmel. She has served in the Knesset and is now the first non-Jewish envoy of the Jewish Agency, stationed in Washington, D.C. She noted that JAFI is working to close income gaps in 16 Druze villages and allocates around $8.6 billion for social services in Arab villages. "Social impact is huge when JAFI supports entrepreneurship," Kamal-Mreeh said.

She also spoke about one of JAFI's primary obligations: immigration. In 2022, with the support of JAFI, 14,000 immigrants came to Israel from Ukraine and 33,000 from Russia. These immigrants received resettlement services that allowed them to completely rebuild their lives.

A highlight of the Lion of Judah Conference was an address (via Zoom) by Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. At the time, Benjamin Netanyahu had not yet formed a government, but Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield said that regardless, the United States would be pushing forward normalization agreements like the Abraham Accords, which established relations between Israel and formerly hostile Arab countries. She also discussed the UN resolution to refer the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which she called another attempt to target Israel. She said the U.S. would be fighting budget amendments that would facilitate ICJ involvement.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield was mostly concerned about the global food crisis, exacerbated by war in Ukraine. Egypt imports 70% of its wheat from Ukraine, and 828 million people go to bed hungry every day worldwide. Re-opening the Black Sea will be a priority, the ambassador advised. She was also proud to introduce the resolution that would kick Iran off the UN Commission on the Status of Women. (The resolution passed just a day after the conference concluded.)

In addition to Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, Eric Fingerhut, CEO of JFNA, spoke both in the plenary and breakout sessions. He stated that support for Israel by Federations is unconditional, not affected by changes in government. However, he did not say that JFNA will remain silent no matter what. "The Federation system will not hesitate to lobby about [Israeli] legislation, including Law of Return and conversion. We will monitor regulatory decisions involving LGBTQ issues and judicial reform," he said, noting that Jewish organizations are prepared to respond to Israeli government actions that may affect Jews in the outside world.

Turning to another pressing issue for the Jewish community, antisemitism, Fingerhut said, "Kanye isn't a problem because he's on your Instagram. Kanye is a problem because he could live down your street," referring to recent antisemitic comments made by the recording artist.

Indeed, antisemitism was addressed in many of the conference sessions, including one in which Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, spoke. Her advice: "Speak out, don't let things pass. Educate yourself: Antisemitism is part of a broader panoply of human rights concerns." At the same time, she cautioned, "Don't let your Jewish identity be motivated by antisemitism. I identify as a Jew because of my amazing heritage."

Ambassador Lipstadt, as well as representatives from Hillel student organizations around the country, made some observations about the Boycott, Divest, Sanction (BDS) movement, which targets Israel for human rights concerns against Palestinians. An Israeli shlichah (emissary) from Los Angeles said a covert goal of the BDS movement is to diminish Jewish students' pride in their identities and connection to Israel.

Michael Masters, CEO of the Secure Community Network (the group that advises Jewish communities across the country about security, through JFNA), warned of an unprecedented threat level for the Jewish community. Despite the general awareness of the rise in antisemitism, he said that there is actually an underreporting of hate crimes. His organization tracked 227,000 risk events in the second half of 2022. As the only faith-based organization that refers cases to the FBI, Secure Community Network's referrals have resulted in about one hate-crime arrest per week.

Shifting gears, many at the conference were anxious to discuss reproductive rights in the wake of the Dobbs decision and its effect on the midterm elections. Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) said that reproductive rights organizations like NCJW have discovered that the only courtroom successes for overturning state laws against abortion have been based on the idea of religious liberty. These lawsuits claim that, because Judaism does not accept the idea that life begins with conception, laws that take that approach violate the right to religious freedom.

In a move that most believe will fail, Katz said U.S. Evangelical groups that oppose abortion are trying to lobby new Israeli MKs to try to overturn Israeli abortion protections, in order to weaken the Jewish argument in American courts. Katz urged that there's no time like the present to stand up for human rights, including reproductive rights. *Joan Lowenstein is a former President of the Board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and a current member of JFNA's national Women's Philanthropy Board. To learn more about the Federation and Women's Philanthropy, visit JewishAnnArbor.org.* ■

Federation raises $1M+ for Jewish community support

By Rachel Wall, Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor

Did you know that the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor gives more than a million dollars to local and international Jewish communal organizations every year? In 2022, that amount surpassed $1.5 million and represented the greatest sum given out in more than a decade.

If you've ever wondered how this happens, we've got answers for you.

Where did that $1.5 million come from?

From our generous community! Every year, volunteers and staff of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor work to raise money through the Annual Community Campaign. The 2023 Annual Community Campaign began last September and is currently in full swing, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of members of the greater Ann Arbor Jewish community. You, too, can contribute at JewishAnnArbor.org. Every gift of $18 or $1,800 matters!

Who decides where the money goes?

Volunteers from our community! (Are you sensing a theme yet?) Every year, two groups of volunteer Allocations Committees (one local & domestic and one for Israel & Overseas), plus the Federation's Board of Directors (again, volunteers), consider proposals from organizations that provide essential services to the Jewish community.

What's the money for?

Funds go directly to local and international organizations that enrich Jewish life and care for Jews most in need, as well as to community-wide initiatives that make Jewish Washtenaw County as strong and vibrant as it can be. For Federation's beneficiary partners, these are funds that they don't have to worry about raising themselves, allowing them instead to focus on the work they do best for our community.

Have I heard of any of these beneficiaries or initiatives?

Probably some of them! Jewish Family Services and the JCC receive allocations from the Annual Community Campaign, among many other local institutions. So does Krembo Wings, a youth movement in Israel for young people of all abilities. Examples of initiatives made possible by the campaign are the first-ever community demographic survey (currently in progress), and coordination to take collective local action combating antisemitism.

When does all this happen?

Organizations seeking funding submit proposals that are reviewed in April each year. The Allocations Committees make funding recommendations for the year to the Board of Directors, which votes to approve the recommendations at the monthly Board meeting in May. An announcement of the year's allocations is made to the entire community at the Annual Meeting in late May or early June.

I want to learn more/I might want to be part of this process!

Great! The more diverse volunteer voices, the better for our community. Visit JewishAnnArbor.org/about-us/community-impact to learn more or contact Federation's Community Relations Manager McKenzie Katz at mckenzie@jewishannarbor.org to get involved. ■

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Kadya Molodowsky and the pogromtshik

By Shifra Epstein

February 24 will mark the one-year anniversary of the beginning of Russia's war on Ukraine. To mark the date, I would like to share an account of a satirical "hymn" written in Yiddish, in Kyiv, in 1919, during another war in Ukraine.

The poem Shir halel tzu der pogromtshik, "Hymn to the Beloved Instigator who Took My Money and the Money of My Friends During a Pogrom but Didn't Kill Us," by Kadya Molodovsky (1894–1975), was composed in Yiddish and recited in the aftermath of a 1919 pogrom in Kyiv. The poem was never published, but was described by Molodowsky in both her published memoirs and in a newspaper interview published in 1949 in the Israeli Hebrew language newspaper, Maariv.

Kadya Molodowsky, renowned as an editor, poet, critic, playwright, and short story writer, is arguably the best-known and beloved female writer of Yiddish and Hebrew.

She was born and grew up in Byaroza Kartuza, in northern Poland, where she received both Jewish religious and secular education. Her father, a teacher in a traditional Jewish elementary school, instructed her in the study of Torah. Her paternal grandmother taught her Yiddish. She graduated from a Polish gymnasium and also studied secular subjects with private tutors, in Russian, including geography, philosophy, and world history.

In 1912 when she was 19 years old, she moved to Warsaw where she had training at the first Hebrew seminary in the world for kindergarten teachers and taught at a Hebrew language kindergarten, attended mostly by poor Jewish children in Warsaw.

During World War I the seminary and kindergarten moved to Odessa and Molodowsky moved there as well, continuing her work as a kindergarten teacher and private tutor.

In Odessa she met the poets Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934) and Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875–1943), the pioneers of modern Hebrew literature. It was also in Odessa when Molodowsky started writing poetry in Yiddish.

During the Bolshevik Revolution and Russia's civil war, Molodowsky left Odessa with the intention of traveling back to her parent's home in northern Poland.

However, she was stopped on the road by authorities in Kyiv and was unable to leave. She stayed in Kyiv until the end of 1919, working as a private teacher and also active in a Yiddish literary circle under the leadership of the poet David Bergelson (1884–1952).

During Russia's civil war, more than 1,200 pogroms were committed in Ukraine, including several in Kyiv in 1919 during which dozens of Jews were raped and murdered.

Molodowsky recorded events connected with her experience during a 1919 pogrom in Kyiv in her autobiography, Mayn Zayde Zayde Zikhrones "My great-grand father's inheritance," published in installments in her Yiddish journal *Di svive* (New York, 1965–1974). Translated from issue no. 33 (1971) by Zelda Kahan Newman for 2021 book about Molodowsky:

In Kiev there was talk of a pogrom. There had been a regime change. One of my friends, a dentist, proposed that I come and stay in her apartment during these turbulent times. She lived in an upscale section of the town. She was sure that the pogrom would not reach her part of the city. She also invited some other friends. We were all young and we enjoyed being together.

One morning we heard a loud knock on the door. We knew that this could not be a welcome "guest." But we had no choice. Our hostess opened the door. Four handsome young officers entered. They didn't say "Good morning." They ordered: "Give us your money." We had been sitting at the table eating breakfast. In order to speed up our collecting the cash, they drew their revolvers from their concealed holsters. One of them came over to me and placed his revolver against my heart. In that moment, I didn't feel any fear. I was probably already dead from fright. It seems that Elijah the prophet protected me. The officer cocked the revolver, but he didn't shoot. He had a fine noble face. Till today I still don't understand how someone becomes a pogromtshik.

These fellows took our rings, our watches, any money that we had. They didn't forget to ask the dentist if she had a stash of gold teeth. In short — they elegantly stuffed everything into their pockets and left. They were "genteel people." They didn't beat anybody or curse anybody. But truth be told, they didn't even say "Goodbye. Be healthy." The door closed and it was over.

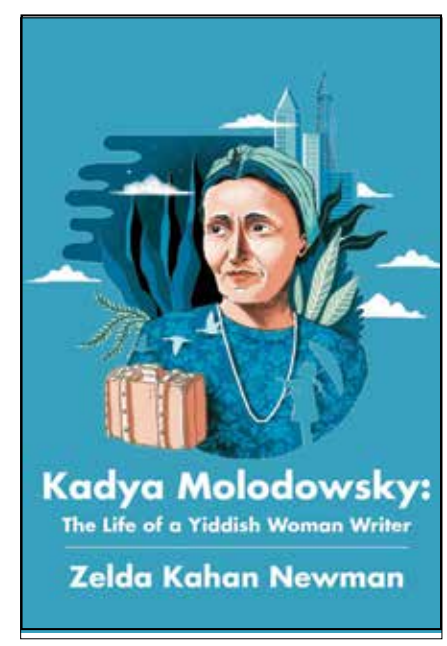
When they left, we, the robbed young girls, praised them. They're quite good people. They hadn't sent us to the next world. Each day life hung by a thin thread. We thanked God that the day had ended. That in whatever way, we had survived it.

And then, the regime changed again. The violent gangs were driven away. We had a small party at the dentist's home celebrating our surviving the pogrom. For the occasion of the party, I wrote a joyous "Praisesong" for the pogromtshiks. I described how they were welcomed with a parade in paradise where they were given medals reserved only for tzaddikim.

Though shortly after this experience, Molodowsky's earliest poems were published by David Bergelson in the prestigious literary Yiddish journal, *Eygns Farlag*, her "Shir halel her tzu der pogromtshik" was not among them. In my research, I discovered that the poem itself was never published. However, historians are still discovering more information on the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1919 in Ukraine.

For me, Molodowsky's account of life in Kyiv during the pogrom and her feelings towards the protagonists bring a measure of humanity and sanity to my life, a counterweight to the anxiety and concern I feel about the war in Ukraine. As the war continues, perhaps it is time to share more stories of the righteous people who risk their lives to save others. I am also thinking about stories of Israelis saving Palestinians, and of Palestinians saving Israelis.

Special thanks to Professor Avraham Novershtern, professor Emeritus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the head of the bibliographical project "Index to Yiddish Periodicals," for showing interest in my article and sending me the reference to the *Svive* issue where Kadya's account was published. Also thanks to Joseph Reisbeg, a Fellow at the Yiddish Book Center, for xeroxing the pages from the *Svive* account. ■



Rabbi Whinston receives the Genesis Humanitarian Award

From remarks by Murray Rosenthal, and Christine Modey

On Sunday, November 20, 2022, Temple Beth Emeth (TBE), together with their partners at Genesis of Ann Arbor, St. Clare's of Assisi Episcopal Church, held their annual Erev Thanksgiving gathering. The evening was filled with songs by both choirs, readings, and interpersonal conversations. But the highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Genesis Humanitarian Award, this year given to Rabbi Josh Whinston of Temple Beth Emeth.

The Genesis Humanitarian Award promotes recognition of people and organizations whose actions exemplify the Genesis Vision and Spirit by embracing mutual trust, respect, and appreciation of all people, and living the ideals of faith and inclusiveness to heal a broken world.

Over the years, certain members of the community have stood out by devoting countless hours toward improving the relationships with which Genesis is now blessed. Still others are deeply involved in a wide variety of social justice activities or are tireless volunteers in community service organizations. Out of the many worthy individuals in the community and the combined TBE and St. Clare's congregations, Genesis seeks to recognize those who inspire future generations. In the past, the Genesis Humanitarian Award has been presented to Christine Modey (2020), Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, Refugee Services Department (2018), the Back Door Food Pantry (2017), Bob Milstein (2017), Irene Butter (2012), Richard Bailey (2010), James Schairbaum (2007), Sandy Elden (2005), Phil Bowen (2003), Jackie Moore (2001), Rabbi Bob Levy (1999), and The Rev. Doug Evett (1997).

Rabbi Whinston moved to Ann Arbor in the summer of 2016 and, in the wake of the injustices at the southern border of the country in 2017, he asked the Temple Beth Emeth community to speak out and use their collective voice to effect change.

Left to right: Christine Modey, Murray Rosenthal, Rabbi Josh Whinston, The Rev. Anne Clarke. Photo credit Bette Cotzin.

When prompted by a congregant to re-read a *New York Times* article about the separation of children from their families, he realized the tragedies taking place at the border could not be ignored. Rabbi Whinston's courage, clarity, and conviction inspired many to take up the effort to make a change.

In the summer of 2018, Rabbi Whinston helped a woman find her family by driving her to Pittsburgh. Ms. Gonzalez, a Guatemalan woman, had been separated from her children at the U.S. border in Texas. Weeks later, in the aftermath of the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh, Rabbi Whinston reflected on living up to his religious values. In his own words, "We take our own values seriously. We take care of the stranger. It is our Torah and our values, especially given our history."

Rabbi Whinston became an instrumental leader in organizing an interfaith "Let Our Families Go" action in Tornillo, Texas. The campaign was formed by Rabbi Whinston, Rabbi Terlinchamp (Cincinnati), and the Faith in Action organization. The campaign organized rallies across the nation with religious leaders and communities. Joining forces with congregations across the country, activists, reformers, and organizations working tirelessly at the border, Rabbi Whinston and the Social Action Committee of Temple Beth Emeth were able to bring further attention to the inhumanity occurring at the border. The campaign protested and raised awareness about hidden suffering experienced by thousands of families like the Gonzalez family.

In the fall of 2018, a caravan of God's people headed to the Tornillo detention center near the Texas-Mexico border. This pilgrimage raised national awareness about three humanitarian crises: asylum seekers languishing on the El Paso-Juarez Bridge; teenagers confined to a tent city surrounded by barbed wire in Tornillo; and the humanitarian crisis in El Paso, Texas, where immigrants and refugees are randomly released with no access to support services or resources.

As reported nationwide, the humanitarian protests and religious activism occurred just outside the detention facility in Texas, and the protesters even served meals at 10 U.S. border shelters for asylum seekers. The work of the Let Our Families Go Campaign continues to be a source of humanitarian inspiration. This activism has also been relied on to support a Rabbinic Resolution on private prisons in the U.S.

In addition to his humanitarian work, Rabbi Whinston is a Brickner Fellow at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, serves on the board for the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice here in Ann Arbor, and is a fantastic husband to Sarah and the attentive, involved, and supportive father of three growing children.

Rabbi Whinston leads by example. He works selflessly to heal the world. Although also selfless, Genesis admits to being selfish in presenting this award. Genesis selfishly charges Rabbi Whinston with continuing his inspiring work and leadership. Genesis also charges the members of both congregations to use Rabbi Whinston's example to inspire volunteerism. We hope that the presentation of this award encourages everyone to act selflessly and work towards a better future world. ■

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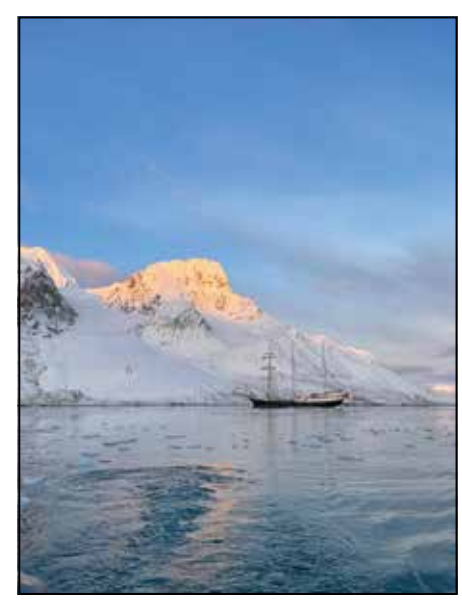
"Witnessing climate: An artist residency aboard a tall ship in the Arctic"

The Michigan Chapter of Womens' Caucus for Art (WCAMI) is pleased to present an important talk by local artist Leslie Sobel on February 5 at the Community Room, Ypsilanti Whittaker Rd. Library, 5577 Whittaker Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. The WCAMI meeting begins at 2 p.m. with exciting updates on our upcoming exhibition and other news, followed by the talk by Leslie Sobel from 3–4 p.m.

Leslie spent 17 days aboard the Tall Ship Antigua sailing in the Svalbard Archipelago during Polar dusk and night. "It was spectacular and life-changing and also very sobering to see the extent to which glaciers are retreating." For more information contact christinasears8@gmail.com ■



HDS whole-child learning

Amy Stern, Director of Enrollment and Marketing, HDS of Ann Arbor

We are in the midst of our busy and robust enrollment season here at Hebrew Day School! This past December, on the first night of Chanukah, we held our Taste of Chanukah event. Our Gan (kindergarten) classroom was filled with children, parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents who joined us in singing, dancing, and dreidel making!

A Taste of Chanukah was led by HaMorah Milka Eliav who teaches Hebrew to Gan, first, and second grade students. At HDS, young students learn Hebrew through multi-sensory activities; for example, they may use their bodies to make shapes of newly acquired vocabulary words such as sevivon (dreidel) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts). Students also participate in "call and response" activities to support their understanding of words and phrases, and we use "props" such as puppets to practice speaking in Hebrew. Teachers are experts in designing lessons that are joyful, age-appropriate, and inclusive to students with a variety of learning styles and temperaments.

HaMorah Milka's and many of our teachers' lessons often incorporate singing and dancing as a vehicle for learning. When young students participate in these dynamic and fun activities, they are not only acquiring new Hebrew words and learning Israeli dances, but they are also learning to exercise physical control of their bodies, practicing following directions in a meaningful way, and rehearsing the social skill of greeting a partner with eye contact and a smile. This is part of the holistic, whole-child philosophy we have at HDS.

We encourage you to reach out and learn more about The Hebrew Day School. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a tour, please contact Director of Enrollment and Marketing Amy Stern at astern@hdsaa.org. We look forward to meeting our fellow community members and welcoming them to our joyful school! ■

Tu B'Shvat and summer fun at the JCC!

By Drew Coel, Marketing and Program Associate at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor

Come celebrate Tu B'Shvat with us while checking out summer camp opportunities at the 2023 JCC Camp Fair! This event is taking place at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, in Ann Arbor, on Sunday, February 5, from 2 to 4 p.m. From Jewish day camps to overnight camp experiences throughout Michigan, the Midwest, and Canada, there is something fun for your child this summer! The fair will host a variety of fun Tu B'Shvat crafts and activities, with focus on sustainability, stewardship, and the great outdoors — central themes of the Jewish camp experience.

In addition to the JCC's Camp Raanana, in attendance will be Camp Gan Israel, Tamarack Camps, Camp Young Judaea Midwest, Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI), Camp Ramah Eastern Great Lakes, Camp Ramah Canada, Camp Tavor, and information on One Happy Camper.

One Happy Camper, a partnership between the Foundation for Jewish Camp and Jewish communities across North America, inspires first-time campers to attend Jewish overnight camp through incentive grants. New campers may be eligible for a need-blind grant of up to $1,000, and with over 150 traditional and specialty programs available, the perfect summer camp opportunity for your child awaits!

Early Bird Registration for Camp Raanana 2023 opens Sunday, January 29, and closes Tuesday, February 28! For session rates and dates or to learn more, please visit the Camp Raanana website at camp.jccannarbor.org or contact the camp office at campdirector@jccannarbor.org.

We hope to see you at the JCC Camp Fair on Sunday, February 5! ■

Camp Gan Israel celebrates silver jubilee

Shternie Zwiebel, Director of Camp Gan Israel

Twenty-five years ago, a small group of 28 children enjoyed a fabulous summer at Camp Gan Israel. It was the first year Chabad of Ann Arbor had opened a summer day camp, and they could never have imagined the impact that summer would have on those campers, and how big the camp would grow to be!

Since that fateful summer in 1998, Camp Gan Israel of Ann Arbor has become the summer camp experience that every Jewish child dreams of! With now over 100 kids every summer, the amazing program offers a wide range of exciting activities, fabulous trips, and unique experiences. The energy and warmth that permeates every moment of camp is the CGI trademark and has campers coming back summer after summer.

Every one of the hundreds of campers who have come through the doors of Camp Gan Israel fondly recalls the loving and nurturing environment, where every child has a chance to shine. The never-ending fun is imbued with Jewish pride and values, and the campers feel a strong sense of connection to their heritage. Children from all Jewish backgrounds feel at home in Camp Gan Israel, and leave camp with great friends, fun-filled memories, and lasting lessons.

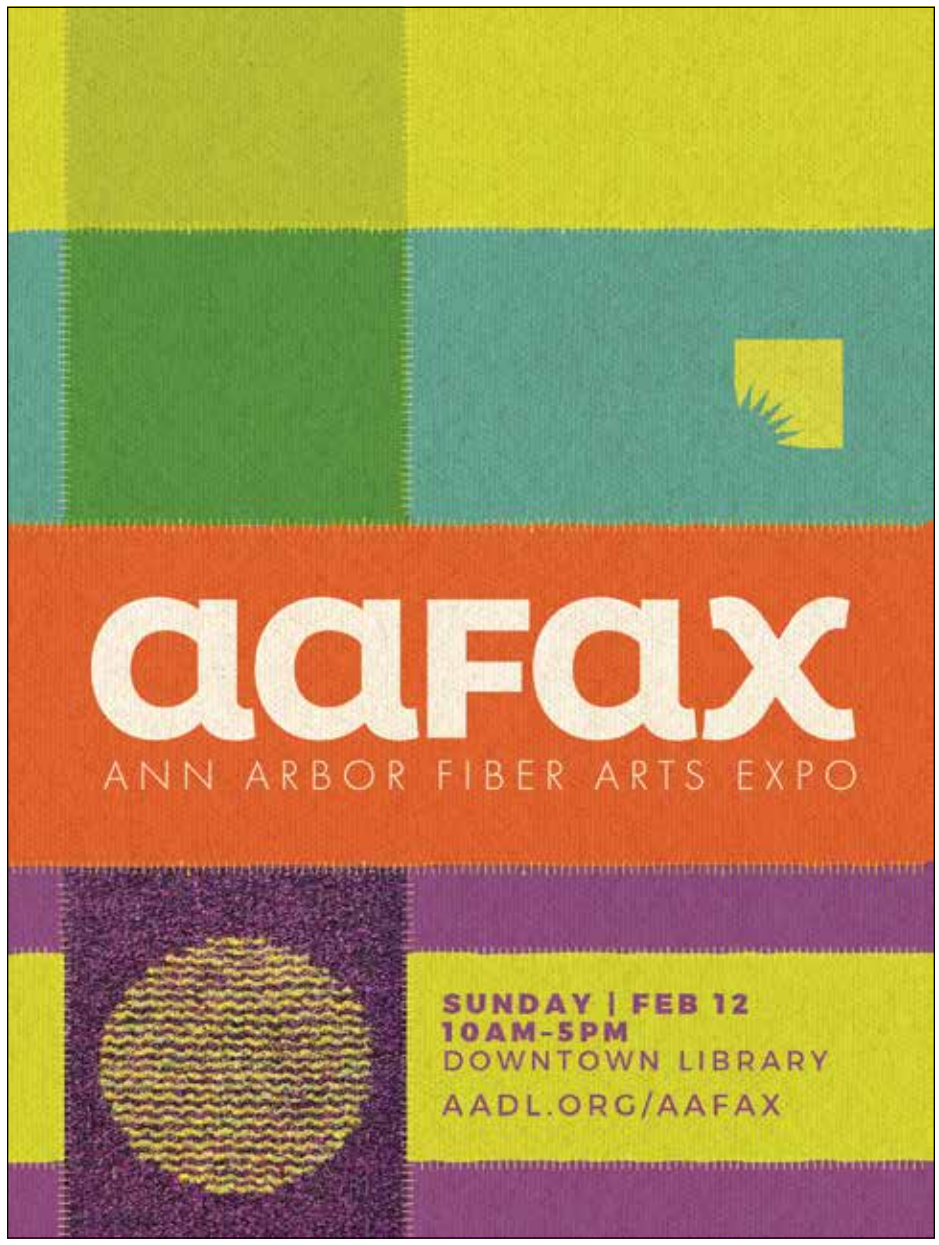
Liat is a grateful mother who shared her reflections of her children's camp experience. "This was our second year at CGI and they managed to pass the high bar of the amazing time our kids had the year before. We love the combination of incredible counselors who really care for our kids and give them personal attention, while having thrilling and memorable activities day after day. They really encourage the kids to be generous towards each other and have good values. No camp has this variety of in-house activities and field trips as this camp; the word 'bored' doesn't exist in the CGI dictionary!"

Camp Gan Israel is part of the worldwide network of Jewish camps, and Ann Arbor is so lucky to have a CGI chapter right here! The impact that this camp experience has on the campers extends far beyond the summer months. Many campers who attended the early years of camp are now parents who send their young children to their local Camp Gan Israel chapters. They want their children to enjoy the same experience they had, which has left lasting impressions. So many camp alumni still fondly recall the camp songs, the thrilling activities, and the warmth and care of their counselors. One young man shared that his decision to study in Israel was prompted by the experiences he had in Camp Gan Israel, which fostered a deep connection to his land and his people.

This summer, Camp Gan Israel is raising the bar and introducing new activities and exciting features that have never been seen before! This 25th anniversary year is set to be the greatest and most thrilling summer ever, and campers will enjoy a camp experience like no other! For new and returning campers, excitement is mounting and the countdown to this special summer of spectacular fun has begun!

At the end of last summer, one mother wrote, "My 4-year-old will never forget this summer and is already telling everyone about the Gan Israel Camp!" Campers at Camp Gan Israel of Ann Arbor anticipate camp all year long, and the energy and incitement carries them through the year.

To register for Camp Gan Israel and give your child the summer of a lifetime, please visit www.mycampganisrael.com or contact Shternie Zwiebel at 734-995-3276 #15. ■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Krewe du Jieux: The most fun I ever had

By Chuck Newman with Larry Hauptman

Editor's Note: Chuck Newman hosts a biweekly series of "Conversations," presented by the Jewish Cultural Arts and Education department of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. The talk show format of the Zoom presentations highlights Chuck's easygoing style and deep curiosity about science, politics, and connections between our local environment and the world. You can find these interviews and other previous shows at https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations.

Where else could I plunge into a crowd of revelers dressed as a Jewish pirate/mohel with a jar of bloody foreskins hanging around my neck, brandishing a bloody sword and offering the male spectators a touch up? Their female partners found this particularly amusing, while I quickly learned that people with poor English skills were simply bewildered.

I was parading as a member of the Krewe du Jieux which describes itself as "a free-spirited parade organization committed to deflating the stereotypes that have historically been aimed at the Jewish people. Through laughter, satire, and holy intentions, our goal is to empower Jieux to co-opt these negative stereotypes, thereby eradicating them in our own minds and in the minds of others. … Krewe du Jieux sponsors a variety of events throughout the year in addition to our annual Mardi Gras parade, including second-line parades for Chanukah and Purim, a Passover KreweSeder, a Rosh/Kippur Apology Party, and the wonderfully irreverent 'Running of the Jieux' second-line parade following our annual coronation of royalty."

They deflate these stereotypes by adopting and exaggerating them to the point that it shows just how ridiculous they are. Members often parade wearing the large hooked noses and horns of the Jews in antisemitic depictions. The float carrying the krewe's King of the Jieux, also known as the "big Macher" and the Jieux American Princess are accompanied by a marching klezmer band. A partial list of the krewe's float themes and signs include:

Brave Jieux World

Jieux World Order: The World is yOURS

Hebrew Slaves on Ice: As a member of the "frozen chosen" I wore a t-shirt proclaiming "the promised land or bust" and "will somebody get Moses a GPS," and I had a yoke from which two inflated giant matzah balls hung. Spectators made remarks about the size of my matzah balls and enjoyed squeezing them. We were led by a modern Orthodox Rabbi who twirled and swooped using a hockey stick for a baton for our accompanying klezmer band.

Jieux D'etat: This year our float featured The Bannon Cannon shooting giant smoke rings and krewe members swinging rubber chickens as our weapons.

Gelty Pleasures

Jieux for Cheeses

Jieux will replace you: This was my favorite theme. Confederate generals were knocked off their pedestals on the float and were replaced by Groucho Marx. Signage included "Take 'em down everywhere" and "Daughters of the Jieux Resistance" instead of the Confederacy.

Jieuxnicorn

Horton Hears a Jieux

The Metaine Jieuxbillies: a takeoff of the Beverly Hillbillies

Goys in the hood

Krewe du Jiuex takes the offensive line

Krewe du Jieux is an inner krewe of Krewe Delusion whose motto is "Organization is Delusion." Other members include The Weathergirls, Kreweleidoscope, Krewe de Mayahuel, The Baby Dolls, The AlKreweists, The Trashformers, Krewe of Bananas, and Krewe of Libertas. I had the honor of having a great conversation with the king of one of these krewes: the first openly gay Mexican professional wrestler. He was nicely oiled for the occasion. Only in New Orleans.

Krewe du Jieux is not the only Jewish krewe in New Orleans. There is also Krewe du Mishigas, an inner krewe of Krewe du Vieux, a krewe known for its embracing salacious themes as this list of its inner krewes suggests: Krewe of C.R.U.D.E., Krewe of Space Age Love, Krewe of Underwear, Krewe of L.E.W.D., Krewe of Drips and Dis-charges, Krewe de C.R.A.P.S., Mystic Krewe of Spermes, Mystic Krewe of Inane, and Krewe of SPANk. A description of Krewe du Mishigas' float with the theme of the burning bush is inappropriate for this publication.

Mardi Gras krewes are known for throwing beads to the crowd. Not the Krewe du Jieux, its most coveted "throws" are hand painted bagels, one of which accompanies this article. Other throws include packets of bagel seeds (Cheerios) and "mazel tov cocktail glasses."

Amazingly enough, in the three years I've paraded with the Krewe, I've never heard an unkind word or seen an unkind gesture other than the dirty look I got from a guy dressed up as the pope when I offered to circumcise him. On the other hand, I have heard lots of "mazel tovs" and "I love you Jews."

As the krewe members say "New Orleans Oy! Such a home."

To learn more about the Krewe du Jieux, how to become a member or donate to them, email me at chuck@LBA80.com or view my interview with L.J. Goldstein, the krewe's founder, on Conversations by going to https://jccannarbor.org/event/conversations. ■

Jewish Studies draws a line on Tablet

Mari Cohen, this article first appeared in Jewish Currents (jewishcurrents.org) in October 2022

On September 19, 2022, the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), the largest membership organization for scholars in the field, emailed its listserv an advertisement for Gatecrashers, a podcast about the history of Jews at Ivy League universities produced by the online Jewish magazine *Tablet*. The ad included a quote by former AJS president Pamela Nadell praising the podcast as "an exciting new resource for courses on antisemitism and American Jewish history." (The email also included a fine-print disclaimer that AJS accepts "limited advertising in its publications" but does not "endorse the views, organizations, or products herein.")

When Sasha Senderovich, a professor of Slavic and Jewish studies at the University of Washington and a longtime critic of *Tablet*, saw the email in his inbox, his first response was to tweet at the association: "plz don't take [*Tablet's*] money. It is in its party line ... a fascist publication." Next, he sent an email detailing his complaints about *Tablet's* coverage to a fellow AJS member, who forwarded it to the association's leadership on his behalf. According to AJS Executive Director Warren Hoffman, the association also received complaints about the ad from other members.

The critiques that Senderovich and others articulated center on several articles that *Tablet* has published in the past five years, including a June piece attacking gender-affirming care for trans people and a piece from last year imploring synagogues not to require COVID-19 vaccines. Several of the magazine's regular contributors are outspoken Trump supporters whose pieces have, for example, attacked the FBI's Mar-a-Lago raid and celebrated the former president's ultranationalist speeches, and much of the magazine's content is focused on decrying liberal "wokeness."

On September 29, AJS announced that it had "paused" its advertising relationship with *Tablet* in response to members' complaints about the sponsored email. (*Tablet* has previously participated in publishing exhibitions at AJS conferences, but none of the AJS members interviewed for this article could remember seeing email ads before the one in September.) In a statement emailed to *Jewish Currents* that day and subsequently posted on its website, AJS said it plans to "revisit its policies about advertising and sponsored content," a process that will include "[talking] to its members, some of whom feel direct harm from some of the views promulgated in *Tablet*." (*Tablet* Editor-in-Chief Alana Newhouse did not respond to multiple requests for comment.)

Some AJS members interpreted the incident as a sign of shifting political norms within the association and throughout academia. Rafael Rachel Neis, a professor of rabbinic history at the University of Michigan, suggested that where AJS had previously understood valuing diversity to mean that no view should be censored, no matter how incendiary, the decision to pause financial dealings with *Tablet* suggests a growing embrace of "a more liberal understanding," which instead prioritizes the inclusion of people of all identities. Others noted that AJS is simply keeping pace with evolving opinions of *Tablet*, and of its approach to presenting even anti-democratic and hypernationalist views as simply one side of an argument. "I don't think this somehow reveals a turn to the left in Jewish studies," said Sam Shuman, a Jewish studies scholar who is a visiting professor at Davidson College. "Rather, it shows that the critique of *Tablet*, which was once viewed as coming from the left, is now mainstream even among liberals, who comprise more of AJS's base."

Tablet launched in 2009 with the support of philanthropist Mem Bernstein, whose late husband, Zalman Bernstein, founded the Tikvah Fund, a nonprofit organization dedicated to disseminating conservative thought. (Tikvah describes itself on its website as "politically Zionist, economically free-market oriented," and "culturally traditional.") [The Tikvah Fund's current board chairman is Elliot Abrams.]

The magazine's funding caused some early controversy: In 2011, Syracuse Jewish studies professor Zachary Braiterman mentioned *Tablet's* connection to Tikvah in his widely read critique of the fund, which accused the nonprofit of camouflaging its ideological project beneath rhetoric about promoting intellectual debate. From the magazine's earliest years, many *Tablet* articles, including those by current Editor-at-Large Liel Leibovitz — who identified as left-leaning when he started as the magazine's video producer in 2009 but has since embraced Donald Trump — and contributing writer Lee Smith, a well-known neoconservative, took a right-wing Zionist stance. Still, the magazine's editors insisted that they maintained complete editorial independence from their funders, and that *Tablet* sought to represent all political viewpoints.

Shaul Magid, a professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth College who was a contributing editor at *Tablet* from 2016 until 2021, says that none of his work was ever censored, even when he wrote pieces that defended anti-Zionism or criticized Zionism as a form of ethnonationalism. Meanwhile, the magazine gained a reputation for publishing high-quality arts and culture content; in addition to pieces by dozens of respected Jewish studies scholars, it published contributions from literary heavyweights like Michael Chabon, Etgar Keret, Ayelet Waldman, and Umberto Eco.

As the Trump era dawned, however, the magazine's political leanings became harder to ignore. Senderovich had published seven articles on Soviet Jewish literature and culture in *Tablet* between 2011 and 2015, but in 2017 he was dismayed to see a series of pieces in which Leibovitz defended Sebastian Gorka, a Trump adviser accused of having ties to Nazi groups in Hungary. Senderovich took to Facebook to call on fellow academic *Tablet* contributors to organize to protest the magazine's "racism and Nazi apologia." (In response, Newhouse accused Senderovich of practicing a form of Stalinism.)

From that point forward, Senderovich began to publicly argue that writing for *Tablet* provided cover for what he saw as its objectionable content. "Its dominant party line was so clearly becoming Trumpist, and it had already been Islamophobic," he told *Jewish Currents*. "We were helping the enterprise. By writing a long article about contemporary Soviet-born Jewish writers that was going into the inboxes of people who take Jewish culture seriously, I was giving Liel [Leibovitz]'s pieces more credibility, too." Magid disagreed: Though his own politics were at odds with much of *Tablet's* output, he decided it was better to stay involved. "I felt that my voice in the magazine was an important one to create some kind of balance," he said.

In the ensuing years, *Tablet* began to publish more right-wing pieces that pushed boundaries and prompted reader backlash. In June 2020, Newhouse's husband, literary editor David Samuels, printed a 10,000-word interview with the antisemitic white nationalist scholar Kevin MacDonald, arguing in a lengthy introduction that exposing and understanding his views would be more effective than censoring them. In a June 2021 piece, former Soviet dissident and Israeli politician Natan Sharansky and Canadian historian Gil Troy dubbed Jewish anti-Zionists "un-Jews," accusing them of nefariously attempting to destroy Jewish identity from within. As the magazine has become increasingly associated with such views, fewer leftist and liberal writers have seen it as an appropriate forum for their work: Last year, after a long period of voicing his criticisms of *Tablet* content in direct conversations with Newhouse and other editors, he said, Magid left the masthead. "I ultimately felt it was moving in a direction that I just didn't feel comfortable associating with," he said.

For some AJS members, *Tablet* made a particularly unforgivable decision this past June when, amid legislative attacks on the rights of trans children across the country, the magazine published an article by the writer Jennifer Bilek — a frequent crusader against trans rights — that framed philanthropic support for gender-affirming care from the billionaire family of Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker as a vast medical, legal, and educational conspiracy to "solidify the idea that humans are not a sexually dimorphic species." "This is not just a view that's going to upset a few woke people," said Neis. Pieces like Bilek's "are part of a broader campaign of stoking fear and violence toward trans people, with legislative effects that have embodied harm. AJS can't be neutral about this."

AJS's decision to distance itself from *Tablet* comes at a time when the association's political identity is up for debate. Last year, the scholar Noam Pianko resigned as AJS president after admitting to having attended invitation-only events with Steven M. Cohen — a renowned sociologist of American Jewish life who has been accused of serial sexual harassment — that were perceived as efforts to rehabilitate Cohen's reputation. In a widely read *Religion Dispatches* piece, Neis and scholar Gilah Kletenik argued that the hesitation to sanction Cohen was symptomatic of Jewish studies' broader preoccupation with "the neoliberal prioritization of relevance, marketability, and trendiness."

Some AJS members see the suspension of ads from *Tablet* as a sign that the association is hearing such criticisms. Magid said he was "shocked" that the association had decided to reconsider its relationship with *Tablet*, since "AJS is so committed to a middle ground position, and to not taking stands on these kinds of issues." He saw it as a signal that "AJS is experiencing a generational transition, and there's a desire for it to take a more activist stand." (Executive Director Hoffman said that in the past, AJS has "exercised its right to turn down advertising from various outlets that did not seem in line with either the AJS's mission or [its] core values"; the statement suggests that the organization plans to develop clearer guidelines about which organizations' advertising to accept.) Neis argued that there was room for the AJS statement to take a stronger stand on *Tablet*: "I don't have a problem saying that I think my professional organization shouldn't align themselves with an outlet that platforms far-right ideology," they said. "It's okay for a professional organization to say, 'We are against transphobia.' It's okay to be political in that regard."

Mari Cohen is an assistant editor at Jewish Currents. ■

Beth Israel in February

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes and events. Services are being held in person and virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Nigunim Kabbalat Shabbat Featuring Neil Alexander and Musicians
Friday, February 3 at 6 p.m.
Join us for an experimental Kabbalat Shabbat service with musical instruments and traditional "nigun" wordless singing. Accessible to all.

Tot Shabbat
Saturday, February 4 & 18 at 10:30 a.m.
Tot Shabbat continues throughout the winter. Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages 1 to 6, but all are welcome to join.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin (via Zoom)
Monday, February 6 at 4 p.m.
All are invited to join our Talmud study class. We will read the text in Hebrew or Aramaic with an accompanying English translation and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. We will continue studying from the tractate Bava Kamma which deals with the issue of responsibility for injuries due to a person's actions. All are welcome to join the class at any time. The Zoom link can be found on the Beth Israel webpage (www.bethisrael-aa.org).

BIRS Parent Coffee
Sunday, February 12 at 6 p.m.
Get together with fellow religious school parents to visit, drink coffee, and enjoy some good conversation.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat
Friday, February 17 at 10 a.m.
Join us for a monthly Musical Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia in the Main Sanctuary and on Zoom.

Beth Israel Reads: *Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue*
Sunday, February 19 at 1 p.m.
Beth Israel Reads series will reconvene on Sunday, February 19, at 1 p.m. to discuss *Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue* by Terrence L. Johnson and Jacques Berlinerblau.
It was the stuff of legend, an alliance unlike others. It commanded a unity of purpose and focus that sparked willing sacrifice: loss of property, stature and reputation, livelihoods, and life itself. And then, like so many alliances punctuated by profound differences, it ended in acrimony, blame, and sometimes disdain. What triggered the end of the Black and Jewish "Grand Coalition" of the 1950s and 1960s? How did it suffer such an ignominious end? Should we care? Is this question relevant today, almost a quarter century into the next century? Is a rapprochement possible, or is it even important to try?
On Sunday, February 19, at 1 p.m., everyone is invited to join Beth Israel Reads for a facilitated virtual discussion of this book. Register on the Beth Israel website. For additional information, contact Deborah Greene at greenedm@umich.edu. Beth Israel Reads is the continuing book discussion series sponsored by the Social Action Committee of Beth Israel Congregation.

Home Shabbat: From the Rabbi's Table to Yours
Friday, February 24 at 6 p.m.
Join Rav Nadav and his family for Kabbalat Shabbat service over Zoom (only) from their Shabbat table to yours on the last Friday of each month.

Theology Book Club — Online
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Evening Minyan — virtual only
Sundays at 5 p.m.
Mondays–Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services — in person and virtual
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

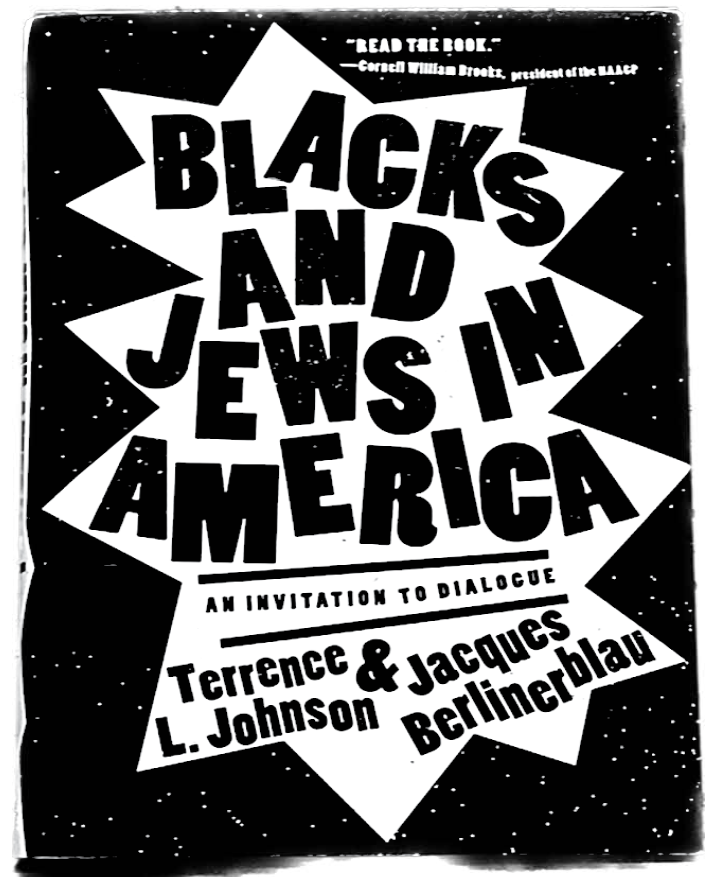
Shabbat Morning Services — In person and virtual
Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.. ■

The Black and Jewish coalition: Where did it go? Is it important today?

By Deborah Meyers Greene

Beth Israel Reads' facilitated discussion of *Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue* is coming up on Sunday, February 19, at 1 p.m. Registration is open to everyone.

It was the stuff of legend, an alliance unlike others. It commanded a unity of purpose and focus that sparked willing sacrifice: loss of property, stature and reputation, livelihoods, and life itself. And then, like so many alliances punctuated by profound differences, it ended in acrimony, blame, and sometimes disdain.



What triggered the end of the Black and Jewish "Grand Coalition" of the 1950s and 1960s? How did it suffer such an ignominious end? Should we care? Is this question relevant today, almost a quarter century into the next century? Is a rapprochement possible, or is it even important to try?

Today, the two communities seem to be farther apart than ever before, and each is challenged by its own scourge: rampant antisemitism and intransigent racism. Why aren't Blacks and Jews united in resistance and against the perversions of white supremacy and the alt-right's Great Replacement Theory — that delusional fever dream that Jews are plotting and underwriting the systematic usurpation of the power and privilege of white people by Black and mixed-race people and immigrants?

Could the Black and Jewish communities unite to resist this insidious blather more effectively, which unfortunately is rarely as humorous as the Jewish space laser ridiculousness? This question is made more immediate as recognition of racial diversity within the Jewish community grows, compelling us to examine possibilities for the future.

In *Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue*, co-authors Terrence L. Johnson and Jacques Berlinerblau seek "to introduce the reader to the complex and contested history of Jewish American and African American relations in the United States." They offer answers to many of our questions, share fresh findings and analyses, and shape a call to action to move this critical conversation forward.

On Sunday, February 19, at 1 p.m., everyone is invited to join Beth Israel Reads for a facilitated virtual discussion of this book. Beth Israel Reads is the continuing book discussion series sponsored by the Social Action Committee of Beth Israel Congregation.

To register: https://www.bethisrael-aa.org/form/beth-israel-reads-blacks-and-jews-in-america.html. For more information contact greenedm@umich.edu. . ■

AAOM Melave Malka continued from page 1

Hayden, Wall illustrates how these writers from different religious backgrounds place poetry at the center of American civil religion. In years bridging the end of the Immigration Era, the beginning of the Civil Rights movement, and the Second World War, they imagined a civic covenant in which poetry could shape a citizen's obligations to others across racial and religious barriers. His discussion will shed light on what we mean when we talk about poetry, religious pluralism, and covenant.

On February 25, Zvi Gitelman, Professor Emeritus of Judaic Studies and Political Science, will discuss his in-progress book, a textbook on modern Ukrainian Jewish history intended for use in Ukrainian higher educational institutions. Russia's attack on Ukraine has evoked much sympathy for Ukrainians, including by Jews. Yet, for 400 years there has been great tension between Ukrainians and Jews, including massive pogroms from 1918–21 and some Ukrainians' collaboration with the Nazis in World War II. This makes the task of writing a textbook for Ukrainian higher educational institutions an exercise in the politics of history. How does one approach such a politicized, controversial enterprise?

Finally, on March 4, Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg of the Frankel Center will discuss her forthcoming book, *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible*, to be published this April by Princeton University Press. In this book Wollenberg argues that, contrary to the conventional view of Judaism as a movement built around the study of the Bible and steeped in a culture of sacred bookishness that evolved from an unrelenting focus on a canonical text, a close examination of Rabbinic texts reveals that Jewish tradition didn't truly embrace the biblical text until nearly a thousand years after the Bible was first canonized, and instead embraced a form of biblical revelation in which memorized spoken formulas of the biblical tradition came to be envisioned as a distinct version of the biblical revelation.

All three author talks will be held over Zoom and will begin at 8 p.m. Saturday evening after the conclusion of Shabbat. The events are open to the public, but preregistration is requested; please visit the AAOM website for registration information.

For more information about these and other AAOM events, please visit http://annarborminyan.org/announcements, or email rabbayael@annarborminyan.org. ■

Tu B'Shvat foods to join heaven and earth

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

This year the holiday of Tu B'Shvat begins on Sunday, February 5, in the evening, and lasts through Monday, February 6, in the evening. Tu B'Shvat is mentioned in the Torah and in the Talmud, as the day to count the age of fruit trees that were to be tithed during their third year. It was later called "The Birthday of the Trees" or "The Holiday of the Trees," but initially it was the day that all the trees planted the previous year were counted as one year old.

The holiday morphed into planting trees in Israel with our donations to the Jewish National Fund. Does anyone else remember the blue boxes or the shiny certificates honoring or remembering people in whose names we donated to plant the trees? We never did anything to mark this day at home nor do I remember anything special in the synagogue.

Sometime in the 70s or early 80s I do remember that Harlene Appelman, z"l, and Jane Shapiro, both very active in Jewish education here in Ann Arbor and across the American Jewish world, created a Tu B'Shvat program for families, synagogues, and communities. It was based on a 16th century Tu B'Shvat seder created by Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, a Kabbalist, in Tzfat (Safed) Israel. The Kabbalist seder used the metaphor of a tree to discuss spiritual and philosophical ideas.

My childhood memories of Tu B'Shvat included buying a certificate for a tree that would be planted in Israel and eating bokser, Yiddish for dried Carob pods. I think the bokser we were given in Hebrew School were imported from Israel. They looked like twigs and tasted like cardboard. A few decades later the movement to eat more organic food along with environmental awareness activists' efforts to help the environment reminded me once again about the eternal relevance of Jewish holidays. The organic stores sold carob as a replacement for chocolate. They were absolutely *not chocolate*.

Traditional foods for this day include the seven species of foods found in Israel and mentioned in the Torah (Deuteronomy: chapter 8, verse 8). The species include wheat (flour), barley, grapes, figs, olives, dates, and pomegranates. Many people like to eat a variety of fresh and/or dried fruits, and nuts to add to the meals. I've pored over cookbooks and the internet looking specifically for a Tu B'Shvat menu with very little success. So, here are some recipes using six of the species to inspire you to make your own menu. The seventh ingredient is wheat so add a challah or, as in the first recipe, a nice rye or pumpernickel bread.

Old Country Mushroom, Bean, and Barley Soup

Jewish Cooking by Marlena Spieler

Tu B'Shvat usually occurs in February when our weather is often cold and damp. Here is an Eastern European recipe that is guaranteed to keep you warm. For a real Eastern European meal, serve the soup with rye or pumpernickel bread.

- 2–3 tbs dried navy beans, soaked overnight
- 3–4 tbs green split peas
- 3–4 tbs yellow split peas
- 6–7 tbs pearl barley
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 3 celery sticks, diced or sliced
- ½ baking potato, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 pound fresh mushrooms
- 10 grams (or a small package) of dried mushrooms
- 5 garlic cloves, sliced
- 6–8 cups water or broth (chicken or vegetarian)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Parsley, chopped, to garnish

Put the vegetables into a large pot and add the water or broth and cover the pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to simmer gently for about 1-1/2 hours or until the beans are tender.

Halloumi Fig Salad with Kale

Tori Avey, from her website toniavey.com (She also has a recipe for a 7-species cupcake.)

Serves 8

- 8 oz Halloumi cheese
- 10 oz curly kale (or substitute with spinach or other dark green leafy greens), chopped
- 8 oz fresh figs (or dried but look for softer ones so you can slice them)
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 3 tbs balsamic vinegar or lemon juice
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1/3 cup roughly chopped walnuts

Slice the Halloumi into 8 pieces. Lightly grease a frying pan and place the slices in it. Sauté on medium heat on all sides for about 4 minutes or until the cheese turns golden brown. Remove from heat and allow to come to room temperature. Alternatively, you could grill the cheese until golden brown as it stays firm and won't quickly melt into a blob. Place chopped kale into a salad bowl and add the olive oil and salt. Massage the kale with the dressing for a few minutes so that the kale softens a little bit. Chop the Halloumi into bite sized pieces and add to the salad. Then add the balsamic vinegar (or lemon juice) and the figs and walnuts and toss to combine.

Fish with Olives and Grapes

Food 52, a food blog

This blog keeps coming up in my social media feeds and this recipe came out of the writer's trip to Iceland where she had a similar dish. The original recipe was made with halibut, the writer changed it to walleye, but it could work with any mild white fish like haddock or rock fish or even Lake Michigan or Lake Superior white fish.

- 4 fish fillets
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1½ tsp dried tarragon
- ½ cup flour (I would use Panko style crumbs)
- 6 tbs butter, divided
- 1 shallot, minced
- ¼ cup red seedless grapes
- ½ cup Castelvetrano green olives, halved
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 tbs fresh, chopped tarragon

Dry the fillets and season with salt, pepper, and dried tarragon. Put the flour on a plate or pan and add more of the seasonings to your taste. Dredge the fillets in the flour and shake off excess. Use a large sauté pan and add 2 tbs of the butter over medium heat until it slightly browns. Add the fish fillets and cook about 4 minutes on each side until browned and cooked through. Remove to a plate and loosely tent with foil to keep them warm. Add 2 more tbs butter to the saucepan and melt over medium heat. Add the shallots and cook until transparent, about 3–5 minutes. Add in the wine and stir to deglaze the pan. Then add the grapes and olives, cover, and cook another 5 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the fresh tarragon. ***Place the fish filets on top of the mixture. Good with mashed potatoes or rice. Place the potatoes or rice on a plate and add the fish fillet and pour the sauce over the top.***

Date Cake

The Kosher Baker by Paula Shoyer

serves 16

Paula Shoyer teaches baking classes as well as writing kosher cookbooks. I've made this cake several times. It is delicious. Seriously, I hope you try this recipe. Paula gives credit to Limor Decter who got the recipe from her mother-in-law, Barbara Decter Shlussel. They make it for Rosh Hashanah but it certainly works for Tu B'Shvat.

- ***2 cups pitted dates, chopped into ½ to ¾ inch pieces.***
- ***½ cup boiling water***
- ***½ cup parve margarine or butter, melted***
- ***2 large eggs***
- ***1 cup all-purpose flour***
- ***¾ cup sugar***
- ***1 tsp baking powder***
- ***1 tsp baking soda***

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and spray or grease a 9-inch loaf pan. Place the chopped dates in a heatproof bowl with the boiling water and let sit for 5 minutes. Then add the rest of the ingredients and mix them all together. Pour the batter into the loaf pan and bake for 45 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the loaf comes out clean. Let cool for 10 minutes in the pan and then remove to a rack to cool completely.

Ashur: Barley with Nuts

Book of Middle Eastern Food by Claudia Roden

serves 12

This is an Egyptian recipe that Ms. Roden writes about in her book. She was born in Egypt and often refers to recipes from that part of the Middle East. Ashur is a pudding with a creamy base of milk and sugar.

- 2 cups whole barley washed and soaked overnight
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups milk
- 2 tbs orange-blossom or rose water

Garnish

- ½ cup pistachios, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup almonds, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup pine nuts
- ¾ cup raisins soaked in water and then drained (optional but used to further sweeten the pudding)
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Drain the barley and then add 4–6 cups of fresh water to cover. Simmer until tender, maybe 20–30 minutes. Drain and place in large bowl. Meanwhile, use another pot to boil the milk and sugar together until the sugar has dissolved. Stir in the orange blossom or rose water and then pour over the grain. Garnish with the nuts, raisins, and cinnamon. This can be served hot or cold.

Pomegranate Glazed Cupcakes

I found this on a recipe card hanging on the side of my refrigerator. I think someone gave me the card from Jewish Senior Life, an organization in the Detroit area. I made them for Rosh Hashanah a few years ago and they were very good.

Cupcake

- ½ cup oil
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups flour
- ¼ cup pomegranate juice

Glaze

- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 2–3 tbs pomegranate juice, divided
- Pomegranate seeds for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a standard 12 cup cupcake pan with paper liners. Use an electric mixer on medium speed and beat together the oil and sugar until smooth and creamy. Add the vanilla, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and eggs, and beat until combined. Alternately add half the flour and half the pomegranate juice, beating after each addition until incorporated. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan, filling each cup about ¾ full. Bake for 16–18 minutes until the tops are set. Remove from the oven and cool completely before glazing. Make the glaze by combining the powdered sugar with 2 tbs of the pomegranate juice and mixing until smooth. Gradually add an additional 1–3 tsp of the juice if needed to form a thick but spreadable glaze. Dip the tops of the cooled cupcakes into the bowl, allowing the excess to drip back into the bowl. Garnish with the pomegranate seeds if desired. ■

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, *248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org*

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, *734.445.1910, aarecon.org*

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, *bethisrael-aa.org*

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org

TBE events in February

Events and services are both in-person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, locations information, and links.

Tot Shabbat Service & Dinner
Fridays at 5:45 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 0–5.

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings
Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Cantor Emerita Annie Rose each weekday morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Daily afternoon blessings
Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon for an intimate short service.

Women's Torah study
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter
Tuesdays at 11 a.m. or 8 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Alter to discover the Talmud, the formative collection of stories and discussions that defined the post-Temple Judaism that continues today! Together, explore the foundations of our contemporary Jewish ethics, beliefs, and practices, as well as some tremendous tales about our ancient rabbis! Join anytime! All materials are provided*. (*It is recommended that you read *If All the Seas Were Ink* by Ilana Kurshan, but it's not required or expected.)

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

Lunch & Learn with Cantor Hayut
Fridays at 12 p.m.
Bring your lunch and learn with Cantor Hayut during this informal and social gathering. We explore different ideas throughout the year with participants guiding our subjects.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion.

Open Conversation with our Liturgist-in-Residence
Wednesdays, February 1 and 8, from 1:30–3 p.m.
Each week, Liturgist-in-Residence Alden Solovy will welcome an open, freewheeling conversation about prayer, spirituality, Torah, or other topics of interest brought by you. This in-person-only dialogue is meant to be a give-and-take session of mutual sharing and exploration. There is no agenda, other than the thoughts and questions that you bring. Once each week of the residency.

Spiritual Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose
Thursday, February 9, at 12 p.m. and Tuesday, February 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Elementary Shabbat Service & Dinner
Friday, February 10, at 5:45 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to celebrate Shabbat with fun activities, stories, songs, and age-appropriate learning for children ages 5–10. Registration requested.

A Conversation with Professor Mara Benjamin about Judaism and Climate Change
Tuesday, February 14, at 10 a.m.
Come for a delicious brunch of locally sourced foods and hear from preeminent scholar and award-winning author Mara Benjamin about her recent work engaging climate change as a theological problem. Bob Erlewine, Director for the Center for Jewish Studies at Eastern Michigan University, will interview Professor Benjamin in what's sure to be an engaging and educational conversation. Registration required.

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint: Locally Sourced Food
Wednesday, February 15, at 7:30 p.m.
Part of a series of free Zoom workshops. Details and registration at www.climateherostories.com. Speakers: David Lange, author of *A Farm on Every Corner: Reimagining America's Food System for the Twenty-First Century*; Stephanie Stauffer, Ann Arbor Farmers Market Manager: "The Local Food Scene and How Individuals Can Access It"; co-hosted by Cathy Marshall, Temple Beth Emeth Dayenu Circle, and Colleen Crawley, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor

Aging Solo
Thursday, February 16, at 4 p.m.
Join us for discussion, support, and snacks at the Jewish Community Center.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck
Friday, February 17, at 6 p.m.
Join us for a Shabbat dinner and candle lighting with members of the local queer community! Bring a dish to share with others, make new friends and let us know what you'd like to see in future queer programming! Temple Beth Emeth is launching a new queer affinity group, and we'd like to invite others to join! We're starting things off with our first LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck, an opportunity to expand our community and to share what you'd like to experience moving forward. Join us for a candle lighting and meal with the local community in our Adult Lounge and help us craft a group that meets all our needs. In order to make sure we can feed everyone, please respond to this survey (https://bit.ly/tbelgbtq) or email Ariane Smith at brariane@umich.edu with the dish you're planning to bring.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle
Monday, February 20, at 5:30 p.m.

Bereavement Group
Tuesday, February 21, at 4 p.m.
The group will have opportunities to share openly about their process of grieving and will also have topic-based readings to spark discussion. ■

Moving Makhloket at TBE

Rabbi Daniel K. Alter, Temple Beth Emeth

Back in March 2022, I wrote an article about Moving Traditions, a program designed to change the "B-Mitzvah" journey for our bat and bar mitzvah families. Moving Traditions seeks to transform Jewish teen education and engagement by refocusing the conversation from a singular event to the child-to-teen transition, both for the young Jew and for their parents and family members. In our experiment with the program last year, Temple Beth Emeth took great strides toward building stronger community.

First, I want to share about another program called Mahloket Matters, an adult learning program through Pardes North America, a branch of the Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies. The Hebrew word makhloket, the eponym for the program, means disagreement, controversy, or argument. TBE has combined elements of Moving Traditions and Mahloket Matters to create "Moving Makhloket," a two-year family learning program for our b'nai mitzvah families.

For those unfamiliar with Pardes Institute, it is an egalitarian yeshiva in Jerusalem that offers all sorts of adult Jewish learning opportunities. The Mahloket Matters Fellowship brought together change makers — clergy, educators, and lay leaders — to transform the landscape around disagreement.

As part of the Fellowship, I met with other members regularly over the course of three months, studying biblical, rabbinic, and contemporary texts on the nature and value of conflict. At the time, I considered the experience Torah l'shmah, learning for its own sake. Like so many Torah l'shmah moments, it grew into much more.

In many ways, American culture teaches conflict avoidance. In general, we prefer to make decisions by unanimous agreement, be it in the boardroom, the courtroom, or the living room. We avoid sensitive topics such as politics and religion in favor of "polite conversation." As many others have observed, social media has reinforced this. While Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and other platforms have given greater voice to minority opinion, these sites also allow us — or even force/incentivize us — to filter the voices we hear, creating echo chambers of agreement. How many people have you unfriended or unfollowed because they voiced an opinion you disagreed with? I know I'm guilty of it.

While Judaism does teach that we follow the majority opinion, it offers alternatives to the need for unanimity. Throughout early rabbinic texts, we find validation for conflict — it is ok to disagree!

That in itself would be eye opening, but the rabbis take it further. They teach us that not only is conflict acceptable, it can be valuable and at times even necessary. One particular Talmudic discussion highlights this best. In the Talmud, a rabbinic collection from approximately 400–600 CE, the rabbis share a judicial principle which states: if every single judge in the Sanhedrin (the rabbinic high court) votes to find the defendant in a capital case guilty, that defendant is instead exonerated! Why? Because, they say, at least one person must argue on the defendant's behalf. Rather than urging unanimous verdicts, the high court compelled conflict. It demanded disagreement.

The Mahloket Matters Fellowship taught its participants how to engage in constructive conflict. We must check our motives and our emotions, we must listen and truly consider other ideas and opinions, and we must remember to see humanity in those who disagree with us. These principles enable us to live in and be part of diverse communities, where differences of opinion can be recognized not as a bug but as a feature, a benefit!

These values also play a vital role in family relationships, especially as families transition from one stage to another. Therefore, TBE has combined elements of Moving Traditions and Mahloket Matters to create Moving Makhloket, a two-year family learning program for our b'nai mitzvah families. Moving Makhloket offers our families the opportunity to recontextualize what it means to become bat or bar mitzvah, what it means to become a teenager, and how these changes affect family dynamics such as communication, emotional processing, individuation, and more. We utilize combined (parents and children together) and parallel (parents and children separated) learning models so that all participants can learn and grow from the experiences.

What does becoming bat or bar mitzvah have to do with riding an elephant? How can ancient rabbinic texts teach us about responding to family disagreement? What can we learn from the seating chart of the ancient rabbinic courtroom about making sure everyone feels heard? Discover the answers to all these questions and more through Moving Makhloket at TBE.

To learn more about Pardes, Moving Makhloket, or any part of TBE's Terri A. Ginsburg Religious & Hebrew School, please contact Rabbi Daniel K. Alter at rabbialter@templebethemeth.org. ■

Calendar

February 2023

As our community eases into in-person events with sensitivity to changing pandemic safety, always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Wednesday 1

Parsha Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Join us Wednesdays in February at to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the Book of Exodus. Zoom Link visit website. 12:30 p.m.

Open Conversation with our Liturgist-in-Residence: TBE. Each week, Liturgist-in-Residence Alden Solovy will welcome an open, freewheeling conversation about prayer, spirituality, Torah, or other topics of interest brought by you. This in-person-only dialogue is meant to be a give-and-take session of mutual sharing and exploration. There is no agenda, other than the thoughts and questions that you bring. Once each week of the residency. 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Yidish tish: (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at ehgertel@yahoo.com at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 4 - 6 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. 8 p.m.

Thursday 2

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Talmud– Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 3

Candle Lighting 5:34 p.m. Beshalach

Lunch & Learn with Cantor Hayut: TBE. Bring your lunch and learn with Cantor Hayut during this informal and social gathering. We explore different ideas throughout the year with participants guiding our subjects.12 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Nigunim Kabbalat Shabbat Featuring Neil Alexander and Musicians. BIC. Kabbalat Shabbat service with musical instruments and traditional "nigun" wordless singing. Accessible to all. Join us in-person or by Zoom. 6 p.m.

Family Shabbat: JCS. All are invited to join the JCS at the JCC to welcome Shabbat. Dinner from a local restaurant follows a short observance that includes secular readings, songs, candle lighting, wine, and challah. Children are welcome. Dinner is free for JCS members. The cost of dinner for non-members is $10/person or $25/family. Registration required: www.jewishculturalsociety.org. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 4

Havdallah 6:36 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion. 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Tot Shabbat: BIC. Tot Shabbat continues throughout the winter. Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages 1 to 6, but all are welcome to join. 10:30 a.m.

Melave Malka series: Israeli Film Night: AAOM. An evening with Israeli film writer and director, Refael Balulu, who will screen his movie ***A Song of Loves: Rabbi David Buzaglo***, which explores the life of Rabbi David Buzaglo, the greatest Hebrew liturgical poet of the twentieth century. Followed by a Q&A session with the filmmaker. At Michigan Hillel. 7:30 p.m.

Sunday 5

Tanya – Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.

Camp Fair: JCC. 2 p.m.

Witnessing Climate-an artist residency aboard a Tall Ship in the Arctic: Leslie Sobel at the Ypsilanti Library Whittikar Branch. 3 p.m.

Children's Tu BiShvat Seder: AAOM. Sing songs, taste new foods and listen to a story. At the home of a community member. 3 p.m.

Tu BiShvat Seder: AAOM. Celebrate Tu BiShvat with learning, singing and new foods/wine. At the home of a community member. 8 p.m.

Monday 6 Tu B'shvat

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin (via Zoom): BIC. All are invited to join our Talmud study class. We will read the text in Hebrew or Aramaic with an accompanying English translation and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. 4 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 7

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 8

Parsha Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Join us Wednesdays in February at to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the Book of Exodus. Zoom Link visit website. 12:30 p.m.

Open Conversation with our Liturgist-in-Residence: TBE. 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 4 - 6 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 9

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Spiritual Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 12 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Main Event: Fed. Fundraiser featuring Unorthodox Podcast at Washtenaw Community College. In-person registration deadline is Thursday, February 2. Virtual tickets will be available until the day of the event! 6:30 p.m.

Talmud– Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 10

Candle Lighting 5:43 p.m. Yitro

Lunch & Learn with Cantor Hayut: TBE. 12 p.m.

Elementary Shabbat and Dinner: TBE. Ages 5 - 10. Registration requested. $5 per person. 5:45 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

"The Importance of Critical Race Theory" with Charles Gavin: JCS. Second Friday Schmoose at the JCC. 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 11

Havdallah 6:45 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion. 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Second Saturday Morning Shabbat Service. AARC at the JCC. This is a lay-led hybrid Shabbat Service at the JCC. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. 10:30 a.m. to Noon.

Sunday 12

Tanya – Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.

Monday 13

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Mara Benjamin Lecture "Jewish Theology and Climate Change: EMU. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 14

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

A Conversation with Professor Mara Benjamin about Judaism and Climate Change: TBE. Come for a delicious brunch of locally-sourced foods and hear from preeminent scholar and award-winning author Mara Benjamin about her recent work engaging climate change as a theological problem. 10 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Spiritual Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 15

Parsha Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Join us Wednesdays in February at to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the Book of Exodus. Zoom Link visit website. 12:30 p.m.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 4 - 6 p.m.

Reducing Your Carbon Footprint: Locally Sourced Food: TBE. On Zoom. Registration required for the Zoom link. Speakers: David Lange, author of A Farm on Every Corner: Reimagining America's Food System for the Twenty-First Century; and more. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 16

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Aging Solo: TBE, BIC, JCC, JFS. At the JCC, Newman Lounge. 4 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Talmud– Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 17

Candle Lighting 5:52 p.m. Mishpatim

Lunch & Learn with Cantor Hayut: TBE. 12 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. Washtenaw County's Only Judaica Shop! 6 - 7:30 p.m.

LGBTQ Shabbat Potluck: TBE. Join us for a Shabbat dinner and candle lighting with members of the local queer community! Bring a dish to share with others, make new friends and let us know what you'd like to see in future queer programming! Registration requested.

Aura of Kabbalat Shabbat: BIC. Join us for a monthly Musical Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Aura Ahuvia in the Main Sanctuary and on Zoom. 6 p.m.

Saturday 18

Havdallah 6:53 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Online only. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion. 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Tot Shabbat: BIC. Tot Shabbat continues throughout the winter. Join us for a playful morning of Jewish songs, games, and stories. Challah and grape juice kiddush included. For kids ages 1 to 6, but all are welcome to join. 10:30 a.m.

Melave Malka Authors Series: AAOM. Dr. Logan Wall of the U-M Department of English Language and Literature will present on his recent book, ***Situating Poetry: Covenant and Genre in American Modernism*** (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022), followed by a Q&A with the audience. On Zoom. Registration information at the AAOM website. 8 p.m.

Sunday 19

Tanya – Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.

Beth Israel Reads: *Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue* BIC. Co-authors Terrence L. Johnson and Jacques Berlinerblau seek "to introduce the reader to the complex and contested history of Jewish American and African American relations in the United States." They offer answers to many of our questions, share fresh findings and analyses, and shape a call to action to move this critical conversation forward. Register on the BIC website. For additional information, contact: Deborah Greene. Beth Israel Reads is the continuing book discussion series sponsored by the Social Action Committee of Beth Israel Congregation. 1 p.m.

Monday 20

Women's Rosh Chodesh Adar Circle: TBE. In person. 5:30 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 21 Rosh Hodesh Adar

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Bereavement Group: TBE. For women who have lost a life partner. 4 p.m.

Tea and Torah for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 22 Rosh Hodesh Adar

Parsha Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Join us Wednesdays in February at to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the Book of Exodus. Zoom Link visit website. 12:30 p.m.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 4 - 6 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Group: AAOM. 8:30 p.m.

Thursday 23

Cantor's (Jewish) Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4-7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Amster Gallery Exhibit Opening with Sue Cutler: JCC. 6 p.m.

Talmud– Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 24

Candle Lighting 6:00 p.m. Terumah

Lunch & Learn with Cantor Hayut: TBE. 12 p.m.

Jewish & Romani Contributions to our World's Cultures & Arts, with Special Guest: Yale Strom: WCC. World-renown Klezmorim/Jewish and Roma-collaborative musician, scholar, and documentary producer. Moderator: Michael Naylor, Ph.D. Towsley Auditorium or VIRTUAL. Noon to 1:30 p.m.

WTBE Gift Shop Open for In-Person Shopping: TBE. 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Home Shabbat: From the Rabbi's Table to Yours (Online via Zoom only): BIC. Join Rav Nadav and his family for Kabbalat Shabbat service over Zoom (only) from their Shabbat table to yours on the last Friday of each month. 6 p.m.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. AARC. In person at the JCC and on Zoom. This is a hybrid service led by led by Idelle Hammond-Sass and Harry Fried. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 25

Havdallah 7:02 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion. 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Melave Malka Authors Series: AAOM. Zvi Gitelman, Professor Emeritus of Judaic Studies and Political Science, will discuss his in-progress book, a textbook on Ukrainian Jewish history intended for use in Ukrainian higher educational institutions. This is a politically sensitive enterprise for reasons Professor Gitelman will elucidate. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A with the audience. On Zoom. Registration information at the AAOM website. 8 p.m.

Sunday 26

Tanya – Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. 11 a.m.

Book Group: AARC. We will be reading ***People Love Dead Jews*** by Dara Horn. On Zoom. Please e-mail Greg Saltzman for more information: gsaltzman@albion.edu. 3 – 4:30 p.m

Monday 27

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 28

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Rabbi's Corner

The Jewish people engaged in two conflicts

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, Chabad of Ann Arbor

As we will read on Saturday, February 4, in the Torah portion, Beshalach, the Jewish people engaged in two conflicts on their way to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai. One was a battle against Pharaoh, and the other was a war against Amalek.

In connection to the war against Pharaoh, G-d told the Jews, "G-d will fight for you and you should hold your peace." However, when it came to the war against Amalek, G-d said, "Go out and fight against Amalek."

In what way did the two wars differ? Why did G-d fight for the Jewish people in one instance, yet command them to fight for themselves in the other?

Pharaoh and his army were not preventing the Jews from reaching Mount Sinai. In fact, the Egyptians were massed behind them, blocking their way back to Egypt. Amalek, by contrast, presented the Jews with an obstacle on their way to receiving the Torah. Amalek was trying to prevent their advance. For this reason, G-d commanded them to "Go out and fight against Amalek."

Whenever someone tries to prevent a Jew from accessing the Torah, the greatest efforts must be made to fight against him. True, waging war goes against the nature of the Jewish people; the verse "by your sword you shall live" was said to Esau, not to Isaac. But if fighting is necessary, we are obligated to do so.

The victory of the Children of Israel against Amalek transcended the laws of nature. According to nature, Amalek should have prevailed. But the Jewish people weren't fighting out of a sense of personal power and strength. They went to war with the knowledge that they were Moses' emissaries, that they were fighting to receive the Torah. And when a Jew fights with the power of Torah behind him, he will succeed.

Amalek confronted the Jews at a time when they were enthusiastic and were eager to reach Mount Sinai. Amalek attempted to cool off that enthusiasm, to dampen their ardor for receiving the Torah. Amalek "met you (korcha) by the way" — from the Hebrew word for coldness, "kor."

It is a mitzva to remember Amalek each and every day. In the spiritual sense, "Amalek" is anything that discourages our enthusiasm for serving G-d.

From the Biblical war against Amalek we learn how to defeat him in the spiritual sense. Whenever something threatens to cool off our enthusiasm for G-dliness and holiness, we must do all in our power to vanquish the enemy and crush it completely.

Furthermore, in the spiritual battle against Amalek we must remember that the power with which we act is not our own. And when we fight with the power of Torah, we will certainly achieve our goal. ■

Obituaries

Zivia S. Grekin, born Zivia Seltzer, October 26, 1918, died December 8, 2022. She was married to John N. Grekin for 72 years until he died in 2012. Zivia was the mother of Roger Grekin, deceased, Linda Shubow, and Ken Grekin, and mother-in-law to Linda Grekin and Danny Wood. Zivia had three grandchildren, Joe Grekin (Jenn McKee), Emily Grekin (Chris Russell), and Josh Grekin (Deleska Crocket) and six great-granddaughters, Abby and Kara Russell, Neve and Lily Grekin McKee, and Maya and Zoey Grekin. She was a beloved aunt to Marty and Ruthie Seltzer. Zivia had a degree in economics from the University of Michigan and a Masters of Education from Wayne State University. Her long life was filled with family, travel, adventure, music, books, and much love.

Lillian Fox Freedland, Sep 13, 1927–Dec 20, 2022. Lillian was first and foremost a mother, mother-in-law, and a grandmother. Her love was expressed through her cooking, in the cards she sent with her doodles and art on the envelopes, through her songs, even those she wrote to sing to her dogs, and through her love of nature and all things spiritual and godly. But especially ice cream, butter pecan and maple walnut flavored, and taking long scenic rides.

She was a self-taught pianist, who could sight-read absolutely any music. Her mother, although poor, bought her a piano, slightly broken, but enough for her to learn how to play. She was also a composer, and several of her compositions were performed. She was self-supporting with her music by the age of 16 when both of her parents had passed. She was a teacher in the Detroit Public Schools for 35 years and retired at 72. She gratefully shared her talents with so many around her, and with generous abandon. She founded the pre-school music program at Murray Wright High School in the inner city of Detroit where she impacted innumerable lives of her students, many of whom had children in the day care program. She introduced singing, dancing, reading music, programs, instruments, costumes, performances, and instruments to their lives.

Lillian performed throughout the Detroit metro area, in many ensembles, with all types of musicians and music including classical, popular, and jazz. She loved to play for and teach vocalists. She was secretary and

programming lead for the Chamber Music Workshop of Detroit for decades, and brought her hilarious and ever-fun ideas to all of the musical endeavors she was involved in. This included with her nieces, nephews, great and great-great nieces and nephews, and her daughter whose first language was music, and for her granddaughter who she loved most of all.

She brought life and joy to all who met her, had a vast sense of humor, and although she could not use the computer, would call the local librarians to have them locate jokes in periodicals, news, and books, that they would read to her so that she could type them up. She would take these with her everywhere she went and read them to anyone and everyone.

She took pride in caring for herself, and living healthfully, and continued walking daily at the Washtenaw Recreation Center until she was 92 and was still living on her own, independently. She was a marvel at 95 years of age and will be missed dearly by all who knew and had the privilege of loving her.

Beloved mother of Shoshana (Jan Warner) Mandel, devoted grandmother of Kayla Mandel, cherished sister of the late Rose Richman, late Hyman (late Rose) Fox, late Ted (late Gert) Fox and the late Paul (late Sarah) Fox. Also survived by many many loving nieces, nephews, grand-nieces, grand-nephews, great-grand-nieces, great-grand-nephews, other relatives and friends. Donations should be directed to: The Irene Butter Fund, or the Turner Center Silver Club.

Judith Kovach of West Bloomfield, Michigan, passed away at the age of 79, on December 10, 2022. She was predeceased by: her husband Richard Lobenthal; and her children, Melissa, Debbie, and Joshua. She is survived by: her children, Lisabeth Lobenthal (Patrick Thomi) and Adam Lobenthal (Jackie); her grandchildren, Sarah, Ruth, James, Jamie, Michaela, Joseph, and Aaron; her great grandchildren, Orianna, Okira, Obie, Noah, Layla, Gracie, Owin, Parker, and Kensley; and also Judith Ann Kovach. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

Linda Grekin on the death of her mother-in-law, Zivia Grekin, grandmother of Joe Grekin (Jenn McKee) & Josh Grekin (Deleska Crocket), great grandmother of Neve and Lily Grekin McKee & Maya and Zoey Grekin. December 8.

Shoshana Mandel-Warner (Jan Warner), on the death of her mother, Lillian Fox Freedland, and grandmother of Kayla. December 20.

Lisa (Howie) Saulles on the death of her brother, Norman Kanagur, uncle of Ariel (Evan) Zoldan and Daniel (Laura) Saulles, and brother of Caren (David) Worel. December 11.

Anne Heybey Wasciuk (John Wasciuk) on the death of her aunt, Susan Raskin. December 21.

Lisabeth Lobenthal on the death of her mother, Judith Kovach. December 10.

Stanton Elias on the death of his brother, Edward Elias. December 26.

Lois Weisman on the death of her mother, Shulamith Weisman. January 3.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Roberne, Sebastian, and Khloe Lissage on their bnei mitzvah. February 11.

Pablo Marenales on his adult bar mitzvah. February 18.

Daryl Hafter and Ellen Schwartz on their adult bat mitzvah. February 25.

We can't help you resist the dessert tray.

But we can help you split the dinner bill with Zelle.®

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On Sunday, March 19, answer the call for

SUPER SUNDAY

The most important phone call you'll get all year!

If you get a call from an unknown number on Sunday, March 19, please answer!
You'll have the opportunity to support Jewish life locally and around the world through the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor 2023 Annual Community Campaign.

All funds raised go directly to the Jewish causes you care about most

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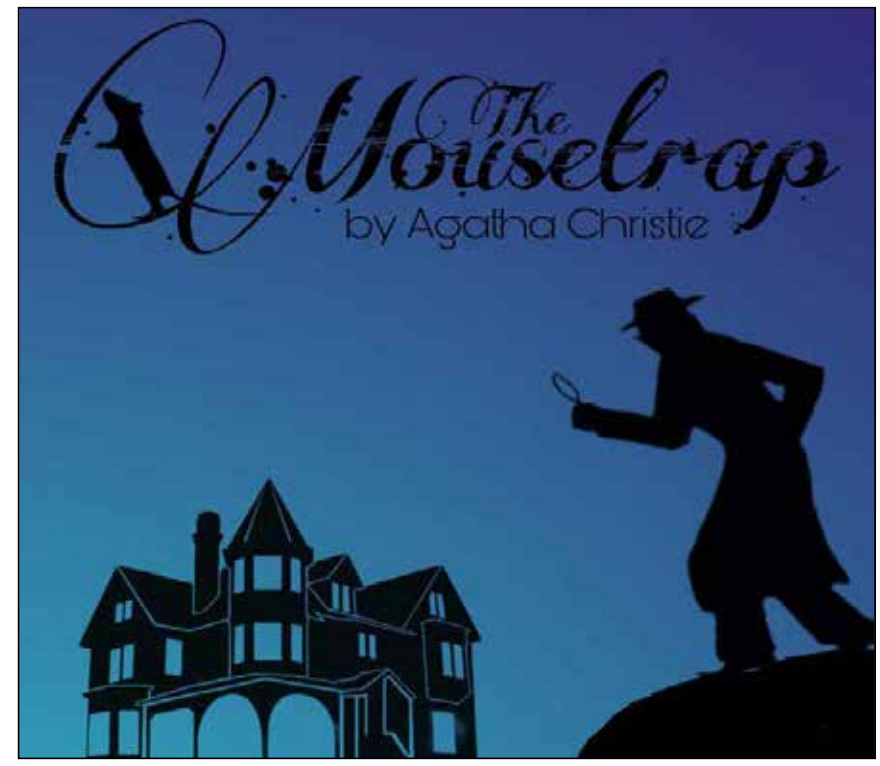

FEBRUARY 23, 24, 25, 26
THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

MARCH 1, 2, 3, 4, 2023
WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

At the Riverside Arts Center . 76 N. Huron Street . Ypsilanti, Michigan

ALL SHOWS AT 8 PM EXCEPT MATINEES AT 2 PM: SUNDAY the 26th and WEDNESDAY MARCH 1st
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IN PERSON AT WCC!
WITH VIRTUAL OPTION

Featuring a live recording of the UNORTHODOX podcast
And interview with NYT best-selling author, Broadway performer & Ann Arbor native GAVRIEL SAVIT

February 9, 2023, 6:30PM
Tickets start at $36 for first-time Main Event attendees

Light appetizer & dessert reception!
Kosher under supervision
Amazing raffle prizes!

Tickets & info at JewishAnnArbor.org
Participants will be asked to support the community with a meaningful gift to the Jewish Federation's 2023 Annual Community Campaign.

In-person registration is closed, but you can
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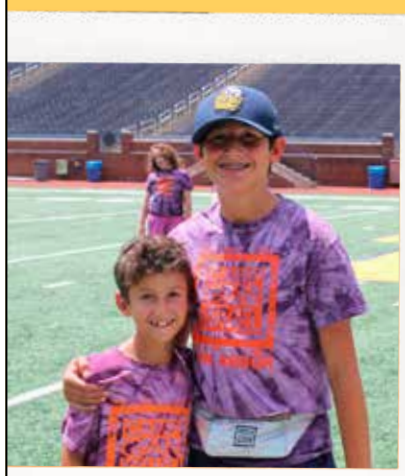

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